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“Blood Neighbours” and Border Enemies: Transport, Trade,
Talibee Networks and The Gambia-Senegal Relations, 1960-
2015.

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**Submitted for the MPhil in African Studies Program
University of Edinburgh, Scotland
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Declaration Page

I declare that this thesis is entirely my work, except where otherwise acknowledged and it has not been submitted for any degree or professional qualification.

Date:

Signed

Abstract

Since the Senegambia Confederation collapsed in 1989, The Gambia-Senegal interstate conflicts over the border have intensified. Irrespective of the recurrence of interstate political difficulties, people in the two countries nurture a popular belief that they are kinsmen and they have a shared culture. They describe themselves as “one people” and they use kinship metaphors to refer to each other. The two countries have made efforts to foster a closer relationship irrespective of recurrent political difficulties over the border. This thesis argues that shared culture, language and religion mediate the divisive power of The Gambia-Senegal border. It explores the historical, cultural, religious and economic factors that perpetuated the conditions of both conflict and cooperation in interstate relations from 1960 to 2015. It further argues that state and non-state actors (transporters, traders, religious actors and ordinary people) use the resources they have in the state, culture and religion to navigate the complex context of the border, which is a major source of tension in cross-border mobility and trade and in interstate politics.

Senegal has had violent conflicts with two of its neighbours, Mauritania and Guinea Bissau, respectively, over their shared borders. But it has avoided similar conflicts with The Gambia. The popular perception that Gambians and Senegalese are “one people” in two countries is partly credited for this situation. The two cultural notions of the “mother’s child” and “father’s child” expressed in the Wolof language as *dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye*, are useful terminologies for understanding why interstate political difficulties never degenerated into violent conflict. The “mother’s child” represents cross-border relations of intimacy. The “father’s child” stands for cross-border relations of competitive intimacy. When state and non-state actors are influenced by the former notion, they behave in ways that deflate conflict. They are motivated to resolve problems and de-escalate interstate tensions. But if notions of competitive intimacy influence them, kinship ties are disregarded and transactional attitudes that re-activate tensions are adopted. Consequently, when economic interests are threatened, cultural principles of cooperation and kinship models get abandoned for transactional behaviour and competitive attitudes.

Case studies from the Amdallai-Karang and Farrafenni-Keur Ayib border settlements show that conflict decisions from the top are de-escalated by grassroots processes that are performed through language. State actors and non-state actors use language to negotiate and renegotiate the divisive nature of the border. The political economy of the border influences whether people prioritise kinship bonds or the escalation of tension in their interactions. Cross-border traders and religious actors have been more disposed towards fostering agreeable and cooperative relations. Transporters facilitate cross-border mobility and foster connections. They facilitated the joint transport network in the past. However, they subsequently devised plans that led to the disintegration of the transport network. Currently, they promote and sustain interstate disagreements on cross-border transport. They also contributed to the ongoing conflict on the border. State actors from both sides of the border have also demonstrated mixed goals towards the border. Notwithstanding, the use of kinship metaphors creates new continuities across the discontinuity of legal territory and this has prevented The Gambia and Senegal from veering into violent conflict. Thus, from 1960-2015, social relations acted as political glue in interstate relations in Senegambia.

Dedication

In loving memories of my Father

Biran B. Khan

&

Mama Ceesay, my beloved grandmother

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my endless thanks to my supervisors Professor Paul Nugent, and Dr. Wolfgang Zeller, for guiding this work. I also express endless thanks to Professor Pierre Englebert, for reading various chapters of this work and for providing comments on them. I also owe special thanks to Professor Mark Christian, who provided me with workspace, when I badly needed one. I also thank him for being a source of hope in bleak moments. My sincere thanks to friends and family members who read part of this work and shared their opinion with me.

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My love and thanks to my "boyz" Muhammad, Omar and Abdul, for their encouraging and uplifting presence in my life. I would like to thank my mum, Mammy, too, for being my mum, always.

I also share my pain over the passing of my grandmother, Mama Ceesay, in March, 2017. She was a woman who meant so much to me. She loved me beyond words. She cared for me, beyond her personal comfort and she fought for me like I was the only grandchild she had. Rest in peace, my beloved grandma.

I continue my prayers for my beloved father and friend, Biran B. Khan. May God grant him Janatul firdaus. I thank him for teaching me all that he had taught me. He is in my thoughts when I wake up in the mornings and he stays with them, when I retire to bed in the evenings. Every day, I become more and more convinced that I'll keep my promise to him, Insha' Allah.

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Abbreviations Used

AFPRC	Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council
APRC	Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction
ASGIDS	L'Association Sénégal-Gambienne pour L'intégration et le Développement Socio-Économique
AU	African Union
BCC	Banjul City Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
GFSMC	The Gambia Ferry Services Company, Ltd
GPA	The Gambia Ports Authority
GPTC	The Gambia Public Transport Corporation
IDEP	United Nations Institute for Development and Economic Planning
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ID	Identification Document
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NDEA	National Drugs Enforcement Agency
NIA	National Intelligence Agency
NTC	National Trading Corporation
OAU	Organisation of the African Unity
OMVG	The Gambia River Basin Organisation
ONDH	National Organisation for Human Rights
PDS	Parti Démocratique Sénégalais
PS	Parti Socialiste

SGAISD	Senegalese-Gambian Association for Integration and Socio-Economic
SGPS	Senegal-Gambian Permanent Secretariat
SSHFC	Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WTO	World Trade Organisation

GLOSSARY

<i>Adiya</i>	(Islamic term) Gifts to holy men for their prayer and pastoral services
<i>Alhamdulillah</i>	(Islamic term) Praise be to Allah or God
<i>Anglais</i>	(French) Senegalese reference to The Gambia
<i>Apparante</i>	(Mandinka & Wollof) Apprentice
<i>Auto “étrangère”</i>	(French) Foreign cars referring to Gambian cars.
<i>Ashobi</i>	(Mandinka and Wollof) The practice of identifying one cloth for all members of a group or community to buy and wear for a certain social event
<i>Askan</i>	(Wollof) A nation of people, a lineage or a huge embodiment of closely interconnected people that share social relations
<i>Attaya vous</i>	(Mandinka and Wollof) Green-tea drinking “communities”
<i>Attey borr fei</i>	(Wollof) The verdict of a debt litigation is payment.
<i>Baarki</i>	(Wollof) Blessing
<i>Badinya</i>	(Mandinka) Kinship
<i>Badenya</i>	(Mandinka) Kinship and submission to authority and cooperation
<i>Banta kunsal</i>	(Mandinka) twins of the outside world
<i>Bantang</i>	(Mandinka) Silk cotton tree
<i>Baranyini</i>	(Mandinka) Labourers
<i>Beton</i>	(Uncertain source) Stones used for concrete and constructing building foundations

<i>Bour</i>	(Wolof) King or royalty
<i>Bour ku buka bukacmoum nguurram mu hanjn la sa jamm</i>	(Wolof) A sovereign denies peace to the one seeking to share his sovereignty/power.
<i>Boutiques</i>	(French) Shop or business center
<i>Charraah</i>	(Wolof) Flip-flops
<i>Chef de Bureau of the Douanes</i>	(French) The head of the customs office
<i>Chef de garage</i>	(French) The chief of the garage
<i>Chef de Village</i>	(French) Village head
<i>Chosannie Senegambia</i>	(Wolof) Senegambian culture or traditions
<i>Chupp</i>	(Wolof) Tie and dye or batik clothing.
<i>Cocksor</i>	(Uncertain source) A garage functionary
<i>Dairas</i> (plural, <i>daira</i> - singular)	(Mandinka & Wolof) Local terms for Islamic community-based organisations attached to clerical establishments in Senegambia.
<i>Diplomatique geographie</i>	(French) Regional diplomacy
<i>Doleku</i>	(Wolof) To complement
<i>Dome-ndeye</i>	(Wolof) “Mother’s child” but metaphorically it means very strong, unshakable relational ties between people. It also refers to relations from the female line.
<i>Dome-baaye</i>	(Wolof) “Father’s child” which means relationships from the male line which is characterised by interpersonal competition
<i>Douanes</i>	(French) Customs, also used as the short name for Senegalese Customs
<i>Droits</i>	(French) Taxes or duties.
<i>Fadenya</i>	(Mandinka) term for competitive behaviour whereas its complement <i>Farolu</i> – Mandinka name for rice fields
<i>Fena</i>	(Mandinka) Bard

<i>Fenyo</i>	(Mandinka) Tail
<i>Fibpuu</i>	(Wollof) Protest
<i>Gambie nin Senegal mu ding kiling le teh, badinkhungl lem</i>	(Mandinka) The two countries are children to the same parents, they are relative
<i>Gamoo</i>	(Mandinka & Wollof) Islamic feast which celebrates the birth of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It is also called Malud- El- Nabi.
<i>Garas</i>	(Wollof) Motor park or garage
<i>Garaso</i>	(Mandinka) Motor park or garage
<i>Goorgi</i>	(Wollof) Honorific term for men
<i>Gorray</i>	(Wollof) A reciprocal sentiment from someone who has benefitted from another person's benevolence. It is a combination of gratefulness, faithfulness and dignity
<i>Jali</i>	(Mandinka) Griot or bard
<i>Jeli</i>	(Mandinka) Griot of bard
<i>Jemal Keurgji</i>	(Wollof) To enhance a home.
<i>Jinne</i>	(Wollof) Devil
<i>Jollof</i>	(Wollof) The Jollof kingdom, a historic dominion of the Wollof ethnic group
<i>Jollof</i>	(Wollof) A nickname for Banjul or The Gambia.
<i>Juula</i>	(Mandinka) A trader or trading
<i>Juulo</i>	(Mandinka) It also a name given to a trader
<i>Hala mbologan</i>	(Wollof) Traditional quiz
<i>Hijra</i>	Islamic term for the migration of Prophet Mohammad (SAW) and his followers from Mecca to Medina
<i>Huur</i>	(Wollof) Thoroughfare.
<i>Kamanda wuloo</i>	(Mandinka) Kamanda forest
<i>Kerse</i>	(Wollof) Discrete

<i>Khelifa</i>	(Wollof) Grand or elderly person
<i>Kuu jupp tedah</i>	(Wollof) The person of virtues reaps grandeur.
<i>Loumas or lumos</i>	(Wollof) Weekly markets in Senegambia.
<i>Mandaa</i>	(Mandinka & Wolof) Commission
<i>Marché</i>	(French) Market
<i>Marché market-man</i>	(French & English) An underground market
<i>Maam</i>	(Wollof) Ancestor or grandparents
<i>Maulud Al-Nabi</i>	(Wollof) An Islamic and Arabic term which means the birth of the Prophet Mohammad (SAW)
<i>Mbadingho</i>	(Mandinka) Kinship ties
<i>Mbokh</i>	(Wollof) Kinship
<i>Mbobka</i>	(Wollof) Kinsman or kinsmen
<i>Mbohko</i>	(Wollof) Kinship relations.
<i>Mbolu muye dole</i>	(Wollof) Togetherness/unity is strength.
<i>Mini-cars</i>	(Wollof) Mini-buses.
<i>Nabangteh ak warrant</i>	(Wollof) Preaching and advising one another.
<i>Napp</i>	(Wollof) Blackmail
<i>Ndimabalante</i>	(Wollof) Assistance
<i>Nger Yallah</i>	(Wollof) "For the sake of God"
<i>Njuula</i>	(Wollof) trading
<i>Numerithe</i>	(Uncertain source) Plates used for printing
<i>Nyo dema kafo</i>	(Mandinka) Co-operative enterprise
<i>Oppa nalen xamxam wai oppu tolin ngorr</i>	(Wollof) "He was more knowledge but the people were equally honourable like him"
<i>Penchum Chossanie</i>	(Wollof) Cross-roads of Senegambian culture

<i>Raang</i>	(Wollof) Queue
<i>Ralluman</i>	(Uncertain source) Garage functionary
<i>Rewi bukung</i>	(Wollof) Two countries are not the same
<i>Roohe Diskett</i>	(Wollof) word which means a corner for fashionable ladies
<i>Quatre-cent mbarr</i>	(French & Wollof) A car type
<i>Sans contrarier</i>	(French) Without contradiction
<i>Secor</i>	(Mandinaka & Wollof) Groundnut buying sites in The Gambia.
<i>Sedda</i>	(Wollof) Fish
<i>“Senegal sunugal”</i>	(Wollof) “Senegal, our boat”
<i>Senegal bena bopela,”</i>	(Wollof) “Senegal has one head”
<i>Sept-places</i>	(French) 7-seated passenger cars
<i>Sharka</i>	(Wollof) Fish
<i>Si anglais bi</i>	(Wollof) The English side- reference to The Gambia
<i>Sunyo Maami</i>	(Wollof) The days of our ancestors
<i>Sutura</i>	(Wollof) protection
<i>Suuw</i>	(Wollof) The east
<i>Talibee</i>	(Wollof) A member of any of the Islamic brotherhoods in Senegambia. It is also used to mean a student studying the Quran.
<i>Talibee darrsu-</i>	(Wollof) Students who follow a marabout because of his teachings and his lifestyle
<i>Talibee daara</i>	(Wollof) Students taught by a marabout
<i>Talibee tarikha</i>	(Wollof) Followers of an Islamic sect.
<i>Tarikh</i>	(Wollof) Islamic sect
<i>Tefess</i>	(Wollof) Sea Shore
<i>Teranga</i>	(Wollof) Hospitality

<i>Te sito</i>	(Mandinka) The development philosophy of the early years of the Jawara regime in The Gambia
<i>Tissu daroul hhodus</i>	(Wolof) Type of textiles used to show loose flowing gowns
<i>Tobaski</i>	(Wolof) Islamic Feast when Muslims slaughter a ram for sacrifice
<i>Toe</i>	(Mandinka & Wolof) Toll
<i>Toumarankee</i>	(Mandinka & Wolof) A displaced person or a wayfarer
<i>Ujaama</i>	(Swahili) Julius Nyerere's development philosophy in Tanzania.
<i>Umma</i>	(Islamic term) Global community of Muslims
<i>Waahalem</i>	(Wolof) Bargaining
<i>Wullere</i>	(Wolof) Gratitude and the act of celebrating past social bonds by individuals
<i>Yabou</i>	(Wolof) Type of fish
<i>Yalnanyu bur nyamal be nyu muna jamou Yalna</i>	(Wolof) Prayer- May the ruler give us peace for us to render well our devotion to God
<i>Yeremandi</i>	(Wolof) Empathy
<i>Yunni aalla</i>	(Wolof) Bush path
<i>Yunni kaw</i>	(Wolof) Official route or road
<i>Yuni suff</i>	(Wolof) Back road
<i>Wanteer</i>	(Mandinka and Wolof) Sales
<i>Werse</i>	(Mandinka & Wolof) The transfer of monies from driver to patron or the representative of the patron
<i>Wirrd</i>	(Wolof) The daily invocations followers of the Tijanniya sect

Ziarres

(Wollof & Mandinka) spiritual renewal
events held annually in Senegambia

Zihada

(Islamic term) To complement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE GAMBIA-SENEGAL BORDER AND THE INTERPLAY OF SAMENESS AND DIFFERENCE

“A fight each day exhausts love.”

(Lalo Kebbeh Drammeh, late Gambian master Kora player).

“The tongue and the teeth may crash on each other, yet they must remain in the same mouth.”

(Mandinka Proverb).

1.0: Introduction and Context: “We are one, but not that much”

Senegal has had a violent border conflict with its neighbour Mauritania in 1989. The conflict was sparked when communities at the Senegal-Mauritania border fought for the control of their shared water resources. The two governments were embroiled in the communal violence, which led to the killing or maiming of hundreds of Senegalese, Mauritians and even Gambians.¹ Senegal has also had a long-running maritime border conflict with Guinea Bissau, another neighbouring country. The Senegal-Guinea Bissau shared maritime border conflict started around 1974 and went on until around 1990.² In between these periods, the two countries engaged in various instances of military confrontation. However, Senegal has so far avoided a militarised border conflict with The Gambia, even though Gambia-Senegal border tensions recurred from 1960 to 2015. This reality intrigues me to pose the following question: Why have the Gambia-Senegal relations over the border not degenerated into violent political conflict, in spite of the recurrence of interstate border tensions from 1960 to 2015?”

My approach to answering the main research question is to study how The Gambia-Senegal border impacts bilateral relations between the two

¹“Senegal observes a day of Mourning,” *The Gambia Weekly*, May 5, 1989, 1- 10.

²Claude Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa* (DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1996), 12.

states. I also study how the border affects cross-border transport, trade and religious networks and also how these domains affect border dynamics. This research is therefore about relationships that happen at different levels of bilateral contact and cross-border exchange between the two countries. I study the language people use to describe or define different kinds of relationships. I also study how tensions in the different relationships manifest themselves productively or otherwise. Additionally, I study how different people use the resources they have in the state, transport, trade, religion and in other areas, to navigate the complex context of the border. I further study the nuanced nature of state-society relations to reveal the complex nature of The Gambia-Senegal bilateral relations and also relations that happen around the border in the domains I am interested in.

My initial views are that the border affects the political, economic, religious and social domains. And the border, cross-border transport, trade and religious networks have a symbiotic influence on each other. Regarding trade, many goods are generally cheaper in The Gambia, than in Senegal, due to currency differences and national economic policies. There is an economic incentive for traders on both sides of the border to engage in cross-border trade. Although traders would benefit from supportive border crossing procedures, cross-border trade can still flourish (as full blown smuggling), without the approval of state authorities. Lack of transport, however, would definitely stall it. Success in both areas depends on what happens to, or, at the border. These symbiotic connections extend to the religious sphere.

In particular, religious solidarity exists between Gambians and Senegalese. Cross-border religious groups have membership from both sides of the border. Also, there has been a longstanding practice where Gambians receive religious education in Senegal or Senegalese do the same thing in The Gambia. This practice ensures long-term intergenerational family links. From the Trans-Saharan trade to modern times, religion and commerce have been closely intertwined in the

Senegambia region.³ Cross-border mobility for religious reasons has been an important market for cross-border transport. Moreover, cross-border religious actors include cross-border traders, and /or transporters. Cross-border economic and religious links are embedded in social bonds.

Gambians and Senegalese commonly describe themselves as “one-people” in two countries. They foster claims of kinship, blood ties, and a shared culture. Border communities redefine the border to suit their age-old networks of contact, exchange and communication.⁴ People cross the borders between the two countries freely—on foot, bicycle or donkey cart—for social reasons like visits or for purchasing goods (small-scale and innocent commercial activities). In some areas, communities have their farmlands located a stone’s throw from the border. Different ethnic groups can live in opposite communities along the border.⁵ People from both countries can easily relocate, live and settle in the other country. Attending social functions like marriages, naming ceremonies, funerals, initiation events of relatives and friends across the border are frequent practices in both countries. Intermarriages, ethnic mixing facilitated by in-migrations, local hospitality norms, traditional bonding systems, inter-ethnic joking relations, language shifts and cultural assimilation created a people who are difficult to differentiate. People with pure-ethnic backgrounds are rare in this society. Most families consist of members from mixed ethnic backgrounds. Instead of ethnicity, the caste system serves as a point of benign social differentiation, with the exception of the Jola ethnic group.⁶ Of late, rigidities within that caste system are becoming more relaxed, as inter-caste marriages become common.

³ See Cheikh Anta Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadou Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal, 1853- 1913* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007).

⁴The term “networks” is borrowed from Radcliffe- Brown and it is used here to mean “...the set of actually existing relations, at a given moment of time, which link together certain human beings.” A.R. Radcliff-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society: Essays and Addresses* (New York: The Free Press, 1952), 192.

⁵Ieuen Griffiths, “Permeable Boundaries in Africa,” in *African Boundaries, Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, ed. Paul Nugent and A I. Asiwaju (New York, London: Pinter, 1996) .

⁶Godfrey Mwakikagile, *The Gambia and Its People, Ethnic Identities and Cultural Integration in Africa* (Dar es Salaam: New Africa Press, 2010).

Thus, irrespective of colonial rule, Gambians and Senegalese nurtured identical value systems with commonly accepted norms like “integrity and *noblesse oblige* (*gor*), self-respect (*njom*), politeness (*Keursa*), empathy and being one’s brother’s keeper (*ndimbalante*).” “These values are further reinforced and perpetuated in the extended family, kinship or clan organisation referred to as *Keur* in Wollof, *Kabilo* in Mandinka and *Galle* in Pulaar.” These peculiar features of Senegambian society make it easy for outsiders, including “migrant labourers (*tilibonkas* or *navetanes*) and itinerant Muslim traders and clerics” to settle down “temporarily or permanently in most areas of Senegambia.”⁷

Cross-border ties between the two populations endure, reinforced by language, kinship ties, modes of economic exchange and lifestyles.⁸ Similar to the Lozi ethnic group straddling Namibia’s Caprivi Region and Zambia’s Western Province, colonial rule did not reconfigure in any major way long-standing bloodlines, family-ties, the ethnic composition and shared cultural and religious value systems of Senegambia. But social defiance against the border has not completely diffused the barrier symbols of the border.

⁷F. A. Renner, “Ethnic Affinity, Partition And Political Integration In Senegambia,” in *Partitioned Africans, Ethnic Relations Across Africa’s International Boundaries 1884- 1984*, ed. A. I. Asiwaju (London/ Lagos: C. Hurst and Company/ University of Lagos Press, 1985), 73.

⁸Wolfgang Zeller, “Neither arbitrary nor artificial: Chiefs and the making of the Namibia-Zambia borderland,” *Journal of Borderland Studies*, (2010).



Figure 1: Map of Senegambia. Source: <http://mapsof.net/map/gambia-political-map>

Separated by colonial rule, the populations of the two countries have been affected by their Anglophone and Francophone colonial heritages, respectively. The two countries speak common indigenous languages. However, The Gambia's official language is English, while Senegal's is French. Their colonial experiences shaped two major elite types who in language, behaviour, modes of thought and values took after the British and the French, respectively. Educational, judicial and administrative systems in both countries are also legacies of colonial rule.⁹

Irrespective of claims of one-ness, the border, a symbol of two political jurisdictions, affects the shared culture Senegambians claim to have. For example, to-date, ethnic communities such as the Wollofs, Mandinkas and Jolas of Senegambia remain separated by the colonial borders. The Wollof of Senegal argue their brand of Wollof is more authentic than the Wollof spoken in The Gambia. Urban Gambian Wollof has borrowed words from the English language. Similarly, urban Senegalese Wollof adopted some French words. These subtle differences in Senegambian Wollof dialects mean Senegambian understandings of one-ness are not bounded, and are affected by the border. But culture also

⁹Jegan C.Senghor, *The Politics of Senegambia Integration 1958- 1994* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, 2008).

affects the border since it provides the medium to apply kinship language to create continuities across the discontinuity of legal territory. Ethnic solidarity and social stereotypes are both facilitated by the border, too.

Certain cultural notions have been used in Gambia- Senegal relations to de-escalate interstate conflicts on the border. These notions have transformative effects on interstate tensions. However, Senegambian discourses of one-ness have failed to foster a political union between the two countries. In 1982, the two countries formed the Senegambia Confederation, a political union that attempted to reclaim “Senegambia unity” and redefine the enduring political divisions that partition and colonial rule caused in Senegambia. Hughes and Perfect argued that there were Gambians, and of course Senegalese, who opposed the Confederation on the basis that the two countries were in fact different. These critics saw the Confederation as Senegal’s attempt to use ethnic affiliations as an excuse to dominate its smaller neighbour, The Gambia. This view fueled Gambian nationalist sentiments against the Confederation and paved way for its collapse in 1989.¹⁰

The collapse of the Senegambia Confederation problematises the validity of Senegambian discourses of one-ness. Irrespective of claims of kinship bonds, the two countries have had recurring political conflicts over the border from the 1960s to 2015. But border tensions between the two countries have always stopped short of open and violent conflict. Unlike Senegal and Mauritania, or Senegal and Guinea Bissau, The Gambia and Senegal have resolutely avoided violent clashes over the border. I am interested in knowing what effects Senegambian claims of one-ness, their routine use of kinship metaphors, and social idioms of relations to describe each other, have on interstate conflicts over the border. I also wish to identify whether this discourse of one-ness and claims of a shared culture do or do not influence relations around the border. Additionally, I want to know

¹⁰Arnold Hughes and David Perfect, *A Political History of the Gambia, 1816-1994 (Rochester Studies in African History and the Diaspora)*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008).

how cross-border transport, trade and religious networks affect interstate relations. And also, what really keeps the two countries from veering into conflict as interstate political difficulties around the border recur, especially at the Amdallai-Karang and Farafenni-Keur Ayib borders.

The Amdallai-Karang and Farafenni-Keur Ayib border crossings are the main case study locations for this study. These borderlands play important roles in fostering or impeding the movement of cross-border transport, flow of trade and the outreach of *talibee* networks in Senegambia. Local level activities at Amdallai-Karang and Farafenni-Keur Ayib borders affect interstate and state-society relations in Senegambia.¹¹

In trying to investigate the research question, I assume that my findings may be useful for drawing new insights into The Gambia-Senegal relations, the Senegal-Mauritania and Senegal-Guinea Bissau border conflicts. I briefly discuss the latter two conflicts in this chapter, but this research primarily focuses on Senegal's relationship with The Gambia. As such, in the rest of the chapters that follow, I will only make passing references to the two conflicts, where appropriate. I hasten to add that the approach adopted here may not sufficiently account for the 1989 Senegal-Mauritania border conflict, or even the long drawn Senegal-Guinea Bissau maritime border conflicts.

I am interested in both historical and contemporary effects of cross-border transport, trade and religious outreach, hence, the focus is from 1960 to 2015. This timeframe is suitable for knowing why, since 1960, interstate political difficulties around The Gambia-Senegal border recurred without degenerating into violent conflict.

Before proceeding, it is important to provide a broad definition of some of the terms or words used here to clarify the specific meaning(s) accorded to them in this enquiry. Other terms that are used in this work will be defined as we encounter them in the chapters that follow.

¹¹In 2003, in a one to one discussion in Banjul, Boubacar Barry highlighted to me his concept of Senegambia, which includes The Gambia, Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry and Mali. But our definition of Senegambia differs from his. We apply the term narrowly to mean just The Gambia and Senegal.

1.1: Definitions

Senegambia in this thesis is limited to the geographic area that represents the boundaries of present-day Gambia and Senegal. Senegambia will also mean the politico-economic union the two countries formed from 1982-1989, the Senegambia Confederation. Additionally, Senegambia is also used here as a metaphor for The Gambia-Senegal “one-ness” discourses and claims of a shared culture. It is interchangeably used to also refer to notions of collective identities that transcend the limitations of the border and the political quest for the reunion of Senegambia—The Gambia and Senegal.

People engaged in cross-border trade means people who participate in any kind of economic activity connected to the border. People in transportation means people like car park attendants, drivers, and other transport owners who facilitate mobility across the border. *Talibee* or religious networks includes people who organise, facilitate, and conduct cross-border religious events. Representatives of the state means officialdom such as the police, customs officers, and other law enforcement personnel located at the border. It can also include village headmen/headwomen, district chiefs and other forms of traditional authority located in border communities. Political actors mean high-level government officials of The Gambia and Senegal, respectively.

Cross-border relations refer to relations between social actors across the border, relations between traders, transporters, religious actors and ordinary citizens. Interstate relations refer to The Gambia-Senegal bilateral relations. State-society relations mean relations between the state and different social or economic constituencies, relations between transporters and the state, between traders and the state; and between citizens of The Gambia and Senegal with their respective governments or the two governments.

Conflict is used here to mean subtle and outright economic, social and political disagreements, fragmentation or struggles generated by the border. It also refers to reactions to different processes that tolerate, resent

or become indifferent to the border. These disagreements, tensions or fractures have both macro and micro-level dimensions, and are set “above and below the level of the nation-state”.¹² Depending on the domain where such conflicts exist, they may or may not necessarily produce violence in cross-border or interstate relations.

Culture is used here as an un-bounded phenomenon. It means different things to different people. It is relational. It changes and signifies an institution that shifts. It has legitimacy, a history and a context. It also has a moral ethos and an aesthetic and an emotional tone. This fluidity about the meaning of culture will be unpacked and problematised in the chapters that follow.

There is a huge literature, which shows that the meaning of culture is fluid and well contested. However, I adopt Clifford Geertz’s definition that culture is a web of significations, which are to be interpreted for their meanings. This means culture is an interpretative rather than an experimental science.¹³ Geertz’s definition captures the essence of the creativity and contingency Gambians and Senegalese demonstrate in applying different cultural notions to describe or idealise social relations. It also captures the nuances of Senegambian kinship discourses, bilateral and state-society relations and the multiple ways people use the tools they have in culture, the state and other resources to navigate the complex context of The Gambia-Senegal border. However, where appropriate, I would substitute culture with other terms like deep-rooted societal or social and religious values to minimise the ambiguity the use of the word entails.

The first part of this thesis introduces border conflict dynamics in Senegambia, which include Senegal’s border conflict with Mauritania and Guinea Bissau and its border tensions with The Gambia. It introduces the

¹²The quotation is borrowed from Danielle Beswick and Paul Jackson, *Conflict, Security, and Development: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 8. This work defines conflict as “From the Latin for “to clash or engage in a fight,” a confrontation between parties aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means or end. Conflict may be violent or non-violent, and essentially all societies contain some form of conflict,” 149.

¹³Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures (Basic Books)* (USA: Basic Books, 1977).

main research question, Senegambia's one-ness discourse and the interconnections between trade, transport and religion in Senegambia. This is followed by the definition of key concepts and how they relate to kinship discourses. Then, indigenous kinship theories are explained and the role language plays in Senegambia is also discussed. The chapter further discusses creativity and contingency in the use of cultural tools to promote different forms of cross-border relations. It also discusses the intersections between the border, conflict and culture. The part on methodology and the thesis outline follow that section.

1.2: The Politics of Senegambian Kinship Discourses

In February, 2013, Barbie Toure, President of the Senegalese Transport Association, Keur Ayib Branch, told me "Senegal and The Gambia are to each other *dome-ndeye* (children from the same mother). We live together. We share a sociality. We marry each other. We worship together. " Toure added, "... Mam Abdul Aziz Sy fondly asked communities of worshippers: 'Have you ever seen the front of a fabric existing without its back?' Sy was a Grand Marabout, a well-loved and charismatic Tijanniyya Sufi leader. He hailed from Tivaouane, the heartland of the Tijanniyya brotherhood in Senegal. For Sy, religious gatherings such as *gamoo*,¹⁴ ceremonies bringing together Senegalese and Gambian Muslim worshippers, were apt moments to remind people of how "Senegal and *Gambie* constitute the same piece of fabric."¹⁵ In another interview, Dembo Mane, the aged Imam of Karang, repeatedly told me in Mandinka that, "*Gambie nin Senegal mu dingkiling le teh, badinkhungl lem*," which means: the two countries are children of the same parents, they are relatives.¹⁶

Toure's words and Mane's statements, like Sy's fabric metaphor, are relevant anecdotes to this thesis. They are part of Senegambian popular discourses of one-ness. The metaphor, "a fabric with two sides",

¹⁴*Gamoo* is the name given to the religious celebration marking the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W)'s birthday in Senegambia.

¹⁵Interview with Barbie Toure, Keur Ayib, Senegal, 12th February, 2013.

¹⁶Interview with Imam Dembo Mane, Karang, Senegal, 18th January, 2013.

communicates indivisibility of Senegambia as a historical community, where kinship ties endure and are beyond the reach of the state. The fabric metaphor has cultural salience. It is a powerful framework for popularising Senegambian kinship bonds.

Traditional cloth remains a highly valued material in life course rituals like naming ceremonies, funerals and marriages. Historically, too, cloth was also a medium of exchange (cloth currency) in Senegambia.¹⁷ Additionally, Senegambian culture views cloth or textile as a symbol of *sutura*, (which means protection or a shelter), adornment, beauty and social morality. Furthermore, it protects the individual from the elements. Thus, the fabric metaphor reminds society of the different uses Senegambian kinship connections can be put to. The metaphor can also be extrapolated to signify the social meanings and values associated with kinship ties.

Cloth has symbolic and rhetorical power and has different shades of social meaning. It expresses or conceals certain principles and emotions. "Through their capacity to symbolize a social order, what is or what should be, clothes are related to social action and communication in a dynamic way."¹⁸ Dressing communicates mood, or personal philosophy, and/or ethical stance. It is an aesthetic act that is imbued with language and meaning and is acquired from other individuals. "Aesthetic acts do not grow out of a vacuum, but from what is learned from others."¹⁹ As such, the fabric metaphor is a political and social symbol, and proof of affiliation and location for the individual in the house of power.²⁰ The fabric consists of multiple threads tightly woven together. The threads are metaphors for multiple cross-border and intergenerational connections between Gambians and

¹⁷For trade across indigenous currency zones, see Guyer, Jane I., *Marginal Gains: Monetary Transactions in Atlantic Africa (Lewis Henry Morgan Lecture Series) 1st Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

¹⁸ Ronald A. Schwarz, "Uncovering the Secret Vice: Toward an Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment," in *The Fabrics of Culture: the Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment*, Justin M. Cordwell, and Ronald A. Schwarz, ed. (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011), 29.

¹⁹Mary Ellem Roach, and Joanne Bubolz Eicher, "The Language of Personal Adornment," in *The Fabrics of Culture: the Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment*, Justin M. Cordwell, and Ronald A. Schwarz, ed. (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011), 7.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 15.

Senegalese. Therefore, it is an apt metaphor for Senegambian social relations.

The use of the fabric as a symbol of cross-border social cohesiveness sheds new light on the anthropological value of cloth. Anthropological studies on African societies have not given textile, cloth or dress, the same attention as other aspects of material culture in Africa. Therefore, there is a need for further research on the important roles dress, fabric or textiles, play in African social processes.

The physical attributes of the fabric problematises the fabric metaphor. As a material item, the fabric can be subject to wear, tear and disuse. Therefore, it connotes transitory and fragile relations, embodied in the vicissitudes of the political economy of the border. The fabric metaphor is also symbolic of human life, in which dying, an inevitable life course, brings separation between relatives, lovers, friends and foes. As such, it contradicts the implied solidity of cross-border bonds.

Moreover, the fabric has a right and wrong side. This implies uniqueness, differentiation and borders within a cohesive or unified piece. But the borders of the fabric collapse into a whole to become a complete piece of cloth that could be designed or cut into patterns. Reading from history, this image of the fabric represents the colonial history. The British and the French cut Senegambia into two states- The Gambia and Senegal. The fabric creased, setting the stage for different forms of interstate rivalries in Senegambia.

Politically, creases require ironing for a better look and smooth feel. There are two approaches to ironing: first, political relations can be negotiated through official and formal diplomatic channels. Second, social and religious actors like Mam Abdul Aziz Sy, ordinary people, civil society groups such as the Senegalese-Gambia Association for Integration and Socio-Economic Development (SGAISD) and the media, can also help

peacefully negotiate interstate relations.²¹ Their acts constitute the selvedge holding together the fabric. As a sewing project, the fabric needs to be cut into the most desirable pattern and then be sewn to become a complete piece, again.²²

We can further tease out the fabric metaphor based on the monetary value of a particular fabric. A particular segment of society can monopolise the access and use of a rare, expensive fabric. Such a fabric may attract social admiration. It becomes a marker for economic or social status in society. However, it becomes a symbol of social divisions since not everyone can afford it in society. In contrast, a fabric that is affordable for different people in society serves as a symbol of unity and inclusion. Consequently, the fabric metaphor both supports and contradicts kinship discourses and highlights the complex nature of The Gambia-Senegal cross-border and interstate relations.

Other less nuanced views of kinship ties also feature in some academic discourses and in the media. In September 2013, Ibrahim Thioub, Senegalese historian and a professor at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, stated that Gambians and Senegalese are one people and they need to “...remove the artificial feeling of being in different countries.” He was speaking in Mbour, a Senegalese seaside resort town, where SGAISD was being launched.²³ Thioub’s statements re-echoed the concerns of some Senegambian media outlets, which pride themselves as champions of Senegambia unity.

Jollofnews.com, a popular local news source, stated on its website: “Arguably, no two people are more so [sic] closely related than those in the

²¹ SGAISD is known in French as L’Association Sénégal-Gambienne pour L’intégration et le Développement Socio-Économique, or ASGIDS. It is a Senegal-Gambia friendship civil society and bilateral grassroots organisation that seeks to socially integrate Senegal and The Gambia.

²² Selvage, also selvege- means the borders of the fabric that prevents it from fraying or unfurling, allowing for a better handling of the fabric.

²³ Lamin Cham, “Senegal- Gambia Integration Association Launched,” *The Point*, September 30, 2013.

Senegambia region..."²⁴ JollofNews.com declared that its ideals are Pan-Africanist. Its slogan is: "A Greater Senegambia - Towards Regional Integration." Its mission statement encourages the- "integration of the cultural identities that hold a promising bounty for the two peoples of The Gambia and Senegal." *Jollofnews.com* calls itself the "... first and exclusive website to provide news in English on Senegal," in addition to covering news on The Gambia. *Askani Senegambia*, another Gambian-owned online newspaper, wrote on its website, "Askani Senegambia believes that we are the generation that must respond to the call of one Senegambia and one people. This is our vision and the principle guiding our aspirations."²⁵

Both *Askani* and *Jollof* are Wolof words. The former means a nation of people, a lineage or a huge embodiment of closely interconnected people. The latter derives from the name of the Jollof kingdom, a historic dominion of the Wolof ethnic group, which included modern-day Gambia and Senegal. However, in Gambian youth slang, *Jollof* means Banjul or the country itself. "Askani Senegambia: United, Inseparable and Indivisible," is the stated slogan of the newspaper, which further states:

Askani Senegambia believes that with the emergence of social media, there is a good opportunity to help pave this way (to unity). This is why Askani Senegambia would endeavour to serve as a forum for the interests of one Senegambia, one people and one nation. Like many nations that came before us, they realise that peace cannot be achieved without unity. Too often the call to unity falls on deaf ears, ignored by the same people who are in charge for whatever reasons.²⁶

Askani Senegambia supports a united Senegambia and globalisation. But it doubts if leaders have a genuine interest in pursuing unity at both levels. However, the existence of The Gambia and Senegal *mbokh* ties is a source of hope for its unity dream.²⁷

Pro-Senegambia integration advocacy is embedded in cross-border social and ethnic attachments, which seek to ameliorate the effects colonial partition has had on The Gambia's and Senegal's political identities. The

²⁴See Jollofnewspaper accessed June 13, 2013, www.jollofnews.com.

²⁵See Askanisenegambia accessed June 13, 2013, www.askanisenegambia.com.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Mbobk* or *Mbobka* is Wolof kinship terminology which means kinsman or kinsmen. The former pronunciation is Senegalese and the second pronunciation is Gambian

social logic and aspiration that frame cross-border kinship discourses reconceptualise the border as a bridge that creates continuities amidst the discontinuities of territory. The enduring importance of collective identities in The Gambia-Senegal relations challenges views in social anthropology that,

The identification of another person as a fellow member of an ethnic group implies a sharing of criteria for evaluation and judgement. It thus entails the assumption that the two are fundamentally 'playing the same game', and this means that there is between them a potential for diversification and expansion of their social relation to cover eventually all different sectors and domains of activity. On the other hand, a dichotomization of others as strangers, as members of another ethnic group, implies recognition of limitations on shared understandings, differences in criteria for judgement of value and performance, and a restriction of interaction to sectors of assumed common understanding and mutual interest.²⁸

While Gambians and Senegalese can interact and exchange in a variety of platforms as one people, the border between the two countries can limit their interactions and exchanges. Powerful cultural ideas exist that integrate notions of one-ness in society, but kinship carries its own risks. Consequently, Senegambian kinship theories can serve as medium for both inclusions and exclusions in social relations, as demonstrated in the next section.

1.3: Senegambian Kinship Theories

Researching The Gambia-Senegal relations unavoidably leads to a variety of anecdotal conversations. For example, in conversations during my fieldwork, border community elders who witnessed independence from colonial rule talk of *si anglais bi* when they make references to territories in The Gambia. In Wollof, *si anglais bi* means "at the English-speaking side." The unconscious use of this loaded phrase orally re-enacts and reframes memories of the colonial history, histories of blood relations, ethnic ties, migrations and social dispersions in Senegambian history. It also makes a muted reference to a divided identity and the effects of the colonial partition on indigenous social processes. However, it also serves as an inclusive

²⁸Fredrik Barth, "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Bergen- Oslo: Universitets Forlaget, 1970), 5.

reference that reaffirms enduring kinship and social connections amidst the discontinuities of territory.

“*Si anglai bi*” embodies a part of the organic and favourite Wollof kinship terminology *mbokh* (kinsman), an endearment term and a long-standing common reference Gambians and Senegalese use to refer to each other. Other language groups in Senegambia like the Mandinka also use similar kinship terms for cross-border relations. Two other forms of Wollof kinship terminologies *dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye* are used in this thesis as the backbone and the broad motif for decoding cross-border relations in Senegambia. *Dome-ndeye* means “children from the same mother.” Used narrowly, it means relations from the female line, which contrasts with relations from the male line, *dome-baaye* (children from the same father). Metaphorically, it signifies deep kinship bonds. Its power derives from the womb as a nest of reproduction - but also as an intimate and unbreakable accommodation that carries all children born to one woman, irrespective of whether they have different fathers or not. Culturally, sharing a womb means a firm willingness to take a bullet for the *dome-ndeye*. This communicates a relationship of unending love, sacrifice and protection. When used broadly, *dome-ndeye* signifies all intimate social relations. This is why metaphors and idioms of cross-border relations invoke the close ties of relations through the female. However, often, there are many acts in social and political life that illustrate more the competitive struggle associated with relations from the male line, *dome-baaye*.

Dome-baaye is the opposite terminology of *dome-ndeye*. It defines relations from a paternal or male line, and it is characterised by loaded, over-amplified interpersonal competition that is believed to exist between half-brothers and half-sisters. However, *dome-baaye* ties also involve mutual help and interdependence. But there is a social perception that *dome-baaye*-based assistance is self-serving and lacks the sincerity of a *dome-ndeye* driven one. It flaunts benevolence, while *dome-ndeye* -based help is thought to be discrete and shuns flaunted interpersonal assistance. The

outcome the helper seeks to achieve also determines whether the assistance given is discrete or indiscrete. For example, *dome-baaye* social help is flaunted to show unequal status and unequal blessing. This idea is eloquently conceptualised in a Wollof proverb, which says: “the *dome-ndeye* will fix shame within the house. But the *dome-baaye* only settles it when it gets to the edge of the street.” The logic of the statement is that ties from the female line protect ugly matters in the family to preserve family secrets, honour and social reputations. In contrast, the *dome-baaye* aims to bring public attention to scandals and other issues that cast the other individual in a negative light.

The conduct of a mother or a parent, generally, is thought to be a source of blessing for her or his children. Therefore, if a woman has good conduct, her children will have a good future. This idea frames the behaviour of individuals in matrimonial life, particularly, women, especially in polygamous contexts. It is thought that a married woman who keeps her marital vows solemn, fulfils her expected social roles, sacrifices for her marriage and observes social norms in her relations, will have children endowed with *baarki*, or blessing. In contrast, the less-dutiful or bad housewife will have children who would either be failures, or who would at least be less successful in life, when compared to the children of dutiful wives.

In polygamous contexts, the children of less-dutiful mothers are thought to depend on the children of the dutiful co-wife or co-wives. The child of the former faces a “social curse” exemplified by his/her dependence on her *dome-baaye*. These moral judgments play didactic social functions and regulate marital relations and polygamous family-life by prescribing “acceptable” or “unacceptable” behaviour in marriage and society. It has to do with how people share and access resources within family or other social settings. Therefore, these prescriptions resonate with Berry’s idea that economic struggles in African agrarian settings can play out as “culturally specific debates over age and gender roles, kinship and community

relations, and changing conceptualization of people's relations to the environment and one another."²⁹

Similarly, *dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye* concepts are also used to "prescribe" the meanings, dos and don'ts in social relations. For example, a Wolof proverb says that, "a mother's work feeds the child." This means a woman's deeds shape her child's future.

Dome-baaye ties are considered as both relations of intimacy and competitive intimacy. It would be erroneous to perceive all *dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye* relations as strict reflections of their definitions. Subject to individual differences, family backgrounds and other social realities, each of these relationships can be manifested in the other way round. They can have multiple meanings. They can also be multidimensional and lack definitive black and white distinctions.³⁰ Therefore, both *dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye* ties constitute relationships of dependability and subversion. These terms have similar conceptual space in Mandinka culture, too. Quoting Bird and Kendall, Eric Charry observed, "Mande epics are driven by opposing forces of *fadenya* and *badenya*, typically marked by conflicting claims of inheritance between *fadennu*."³¹ *Fadenya* is termed as a force for competitive behaviour whereas its complement *badenya* is considered an integral force that encourages submission to authority and cooperation. "The relationship between *fadenya* can be marked by extreme competition, reflecting the sometimes strained relations between co-wives."

In *fadenya* like in *dome-baaye* ties, the father is the benchmark that shapes personal ambitions in society and thus structure different forms of social competition among individuals. This is particularly true in Manding society where Mandinka *Jeli* communities encourage a child to start his

²⁹ Sara Berry, *No condition is permanent: the social dynamics of agrarian change in sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 14

³⁰ On ambiguity in African economic and social processes, see *Ibid.*

³¹ Bird and Kendall, 1980, 56 quoted in Eric Charry, *Mande Music, Traditional And Modern Music of The Maninka and Mandinka of West Africa* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 56.

competitive zeal with subtle rivalry with his father because he (child) is expected to surpass the achievements and reputations of his father.³²

Although the examples given here are limited to Wollofs and Mandinkas, other Senegambian ethnic groups like the Peul, Serere and Jola use similar social concepts to set standards for social norms, interpersonal and cross-border relations. Thus, these theories of kinship crosscut social barriers and glue together different segments of Senegambian society. These theories are propagated through language, the medium for entrenching social narratives about collective identities and kinship bonds. The next section explores the role language plays in fostering cross-border ties in Senegambia.

1.4: Sengembian Kinship Discourses and the Power of Language

Senegambian cultural identity is largely performed through language, the medium employed to (re)create and (re)enact social narratives about memory/heritage, contact and bonds. The language of kinship triggers strong cognitive reactions among Senegambian social groups, but its effectiveness can vary from setting to setting.³³

Language is used here to mean a system of institutions and the medium through which culture is partly expressed. It plays a central role in constructing social narratives and cognitive reactions to social experiences. Even at interstate levels, language plays a critical role in how the Gambian and Senegalese states respond to the political economy of the border, especially during tensions.³⁴ Therefore, it aids bottom- up and top-down socio-political and economic processes in society.³⁵

³² *Ibid*, 55-56.

³³ This statements support Berry's and Guyer's notion that social concepts can have changing meanings in society. See Berry, *No condition is permanent...* 1993; Guyer, *Marginal Gains...* 2

³⁴ In both The Gambia and Senegal *talibee* is the local name for followers or students of a religious leader or scholar.

³⁵ For more on this, see Berry, *No condition is permanent...* 1993 : 14.

Senegambia has a longstanding oral culture. The ability to use language to reproduce, recall and sustain kinship discourses, memories of past and everyday social encounters and narrations about economic and political relations, is deeply embedded in social processes. Cross-border transporters, traders, *talibee* or religious networks and state agents can make multiple use of the resources they have in language to advance their economic and other interests in society.

Pamela Kea's study of the customary practice of entrustment (*karafo*) in customary land management in The Gambia demonstrates the effective use of language to structure and sustain social and economic relations. Senegalese female migrants (called "strangers") who come to Brikama, a major town in The Gambia, rely on *karafo* to access farmland from their Gambian female "hosts." As a metaphor, *karafo* has been used in Mandinka society to structure various forms of relations, especially fictive kinship and stranger-host relations. It helps individuals to fulfill their material, social and spiritual needs in their host community. It is therefore a strategy people can use during periods of transition in order to achieve long-range stability in their lives.

Kea's case study shows that even with the commodification of the Gambian economy and urbanisation, *karafo* created an effective framework for migrant Senegalese women and their Gambian hosts to share land and labour. In the process, migrant women can enjoy secure livelihoods in their new communities. *Karafo* weaves new forms of social bonds between them and their hosts, thus deepening cross-border social ties. As such, Kea's portrayal of agrarian clientelism in Brikama, resonates with some of the ways different people in Senegambia can use tools from culture to navigate different complex situations.³⁶

The use of metaphors like *karafo* in social communication has political relevance in Senegambia. Metaphors enhance social communication and intergroup solidarity by directly appealing to socio-

³⁶Pamela Kea, *Land, Labour and Entrustment: West African Female Farmers and the Politics of Difference* (Boston: Brill, 2010).

psychological phenomena and are, therefore, effective cognitive strategies in social, political and economic communication.³⁷ When used in social communication, metaphors can provide the moral ground for individuals to adhere to social norms and values, and ensure that individuals are loyal to their social systems. Conceptual metaphor theory further validates that metaphors are effective communication tools, which solidify intergroup relations. They make allegiance to social ties binding on individuals.³⁸ Allegiance towards a social system fosters social cohesiveness. It is a contrast to the political allegiance to the state. Williams argues that “Political loyalty to the state is... morally arbitrary, and thus, non-binding.”³⁹ Therefore, individuals can have different forms of allegiance to their social and political systems.

The contrast between allegiance to a social system and allegiance to a political one has much to do with the varying degrees to which these two systems integrate language to create and sustain people's attachment to them. So, the creative appropriation of language and the contingency in its use will determine the kind of loyalty people show to a social or political system. Since Senegambia has a strong oral culture, it is understandable that language is used as a key resource to navigate the border between the two states and also negotiate different forms of relational ties in society.

The overriding impression is that language is a unifying force in Senegambia. But this may be looking at only one side of the story. In pre-existing national social stereotypes, Banjul's Wolof speakers are thought to resist speaking other national languages in the country. Non-Wolof speakers assume that speakers of Wolof favour their language, and consider it the authentic national lingua franca. Additionally, urban-based

³⁷Mark J. Landau, Michael Robinson and Brian P. Meier, ed, *The Power of Metaphor: Examining its Influence in Social Life* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2014).

³⁸Conceptual metaphor theory is also referred to as cognitive metaphor theory and comes from the field of cognitive linguistics. For more on the concept of metaphors see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980).

³⁹John Williams, *The Ethics of Territorial Borders, Drawing Lines in the Shifting Sand* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2.

Wollofs have been branded as people who take pride in their urban lifestyles, to shun rural or semi-urban people and their lifestyles. In return, non-speakers of Wolof and people from semi-urban, semi-rural and rural parts of the country also emphasise excessive pride in their languages and semi-urban or rural heritage. This pride of language script has a broader resonance in Senegal, where Wolof has become a national lingua franca, instituting different forms of language shift and resistance in non-Wolof populations of the country. From one end, language constructs a barrier, and from the other, it builds a bridge, and this is why it can effectively mediate The Gambia-Senegal interstate tensions around the border. These dynamic effects the use of language can have in society are explored in the border crossing stories in chapter 2.

If language is seen to trigger cooperative attitudes in Senegambia, and yet interstate political difficulties over the border have recurred from 1960 to 2015, we can deduce that there are limits to how language can effectively bridge interstate divisions over the border. Sure, language might incline people to develop cooperative attitudes; people who speak the same language may be driven to cooperate. Miles offers a good example of this fact in his work on Hausaland. He shared a story that his radio set was stolen from Niger and it was traced across the border in Nigeria. There were two options to recovering it: one option was to use the bilateral Niger-Nigeria diplomatic channels, which would have been cumbersome and time-consuming. The second one, which he used, was using local channels. The local Hausa chief in Niger contacted his fellow Hausa chief in the village where the radio was traced. Thanks to the intervention of both chiefs, his radio set was recovered and returned to him. Miles' anecdote alludes to the effectiveness of various kinds of cross-border social connections.⁴⁰ But we can assume that shared language also eased the cross-border cooperation on recovering the stolen radio.

⁴⁰ William F. S. Miles, *Hausaland Divided, Colonialism and Independence in Nigeria and Niger* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994).

However, other stories around the world can confirm that people who speak the same language can still fight. Rwanda offers a good example here. Both Hutus and Tutsis speak Kinyarwanda, yet this fact never averted the Rwandan genocide. If there are limits to the effectiveness with which language can be a source of cooperation, then it is understandable that The Gambia-Senegal kinship discourses are contradicted by the recurrence of interstate border tensions. Notwithstanding, the fabric metaphor and other cross-border social idioms of relations are used in different contexts for different reasons in cross-border and interstate relations. Under strenuous situations, language has been used to rescue interstate relations from total collapse.⁴¹ The next section explores how people use creativity and contingency to navigate the complex context of the border.

1.5: Politics, Contingency and Creativity

In Senegambia, culture is used in creative ways and it means different things to different people. Kinship metaphors and social idioms of relations are therefore not bounded. But culture is the main medium, which validates, channels and re-channels Senegambian cross-border discourses of oneness. It entails changes in societal values and processes. It also accommodates constant shifts in the interpretation of Senegambian bonds, which reflect the continuous evolution of what Bayart calls “relationships of production.”⁴²

Thus, people are continually reformulating (or reaffirming) their preferences, strategies, and understandings on the basis of their experience- both at and beyond specific “points” of production, consumption, or exchange. Culture and politics neither imitate nor distort economic activity: all three are interrelated dimensions of social processes.⁴³

Berry’s assertion confirms that culture is dynamic and it intertwines economic and political processes in society. The selective appropriation of

⁴¹On narratives see Mamaramé Seck, *Narratives as Muslim Practice in Senegal* (New York, Berlin: Peter Lang, 2013).

⁴² Jean- Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London and New York: Longman, 1993).

⁴³ See Berry, *No condition is permanent...* 1993, 13.

culture has been a defining feature of post-colonial African politics.⁴⁴ For example, after being voted into office in 1965, Sir Dawda K. Jawara's development philosophy was *te sito*, a cultural notion that embodied both socialist and capitalist concepts of work and progress in Mandinka society. But in the 1980s, Jawara abandoned *te sito* in order to benefit from IMF-sponsored structural adjustment programmes.⁴⁵ Julius Nyerere's *ujamaa* policies in Tanzania were another example of this inconsistent appropriation of indigenous values and practices, which defined how African elites relate to traditional culture. Claude Ake also noted that African elites use culture in an instrumental way. They "...appropriate selectively from African traditional institutions and culture, using what served them best to maintain and exploit power and discarding the rest."⁴⁶

Similarly, social, political and economic actors at The Gambia-Senegal border selectively appropriate both the border and culture to suit their various objectives. Given this reality, this research is situated within the broad field of border studies, but it adopts a broadly "culturalist" approach to study how border practices of transporters, traders, religious actors and state agents relate to what we call culture here. Culture transcends the border, but the border also transcends culture. And since culture is dynamic, there is latitude for the flexible use of different kinship terms to depict cross-border relations. But the possibility to do that problematises Senegambian kinship discourses.

The aim here is to identify how people and the states "worked with kinship" and social idioms of relations to either limit or enhance their incompatible positions on the border.⁴⁷ Geschiere's phrase is used here to

⁴⁴ For some examples of the selective use of culture by African elites see Kelly M. Askew, *Performing the Nation, Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

⁴⁵ See Mariama Khan, "Indigenous languages and Africa's development dilemma, *Journal of Development in Practice (DiP)*. (2014): 773.

⁴⁶ Ake, *Democracy and Development*...12.

⁴⁷ Peter Geschiere wrote that the Maka of Cameroun like other African communities "worked with kinship" to routinely interpret and reinterpret their social ties. See Peter Geschiere,

mean people's ability to flexibly use resources at their disposal based on existing needs. The flexible use of cultural concepts can either induce stability or fuel conflict in interstate and cross-border relations. However, both state and non-state actors are aware that they can employ them to mediate the barrier functions of the border and to settle interstate political difficulties over the border. This means deep-rooted societal and religious ideas can be used in different contexts for different purposes and for various ends. Culture, like the border, is rooted in conflict. But both can bridge social and other human divisions. Hence, the next section explores the intersections between the border, culture, and conflict in Senegambia.

1.6: Intersections: The Border, Culture and Conflict

Kinship is a useful tool. It mediates competing interests that flourish, interact and retract around the border, which unfurls different forms of tensions, but also various opportunities for compromise.⁴⁸ Senegal's border conflict with Mauritania, and Guinea Bissau, respectively, show how border-level politics can influence center-level politics. Thus, as Williams argued, the triggers of warfare come from the interactions of micro-level political dynamics, national and transnational factors, and state-society relations.⁴⁹ This is why resource scarcity, bad governance, threats to sovereignty, ethnic and religious strife can powerfully trigger armed conflict. However, the recurrence of The Gambia-Senegal conflicts over the border has failed to catapult into interstate warfare.

Senegal has been grossly dissatisfied with The Gambia's control and management of both overland and river crossing routes to Casamance, its restive southern region. The Gambia has also been unimpressed with Senegal's resolute tactics to frustrate its re-export trade, the lifeline of the Gambian economy. In 2010, there was a rare verbal confrontation between

Witchcraft, Intimacy, and Trust, Africa in Comparison (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), XVI.

⁴⁸ See William F. S. Miles, *Scars of Partition, Postcolonial Legacies in French and British Borderlands* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2014); Miles, *Hausaland Divided, ... 1994*.

⁴⁹ Paul D. Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).

the two countries when an arms shipment from Iran was intercepted in Nigeria. The Senegalese government believed the arms shipment which was allegedly destined to The Gambia, was for Casamance rebels. The Senegalese government nurtures suspicions that The Gambia supports Casamance rebels' secession struggle. The Gambia also alleges that Senegal harbours and supports Gambian dissidents who plan to unseat the Jammeh government.⁵⁰

Strong economic and political concerns have contributed to the recurrence of interstate political tensions over the border. However, the two countries have so far resolutely avoided using military force in their border conflicts, and this puzzles the validity of William's theory of conflict. It also defies Zartman's assessment that:

Conflicts tend to become regionalized, not by unbridled aggression but by "contamination," where violence overflows boundaries and neighbors seek allies, as in West Africa (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Central Africa (Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Central Africa Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Chad), the horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan), Caucasus (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Armenia), Eastern Mediterranean (Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria), Central Asia (Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Kurdistan, Iran, Iraq), Central America (Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador), and the Balkans.⁵¹

The histories of the Senegal-Mauritania and Senegal-Guinea Bissau conflicts do not also validate the 'contamination' effect Zartman identified. The former conflict happened when the Senegambia Confederation was on the brink of collapse. Around the same time, civil wars broke out in Liberia and Sierra Leone, respectively. But none of these conflicts caused The Gambia-Senegal interstate tensions to escalate into a war. This makes The Gambia-Senegal case an exception to Zartman's contamination effect theory for the regionalisation of conflicts.

⁵⁰ L. B. Darbo, L. B., "Senegal-Gambia border, other issues top assembly adjournment debate, *The Point Newspaper*, (2011) (Online) 11 April, Available at: (<http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/senegal-gambia-border-other-issues-top-assembly-adjournment-debate>) (Accessed 11 April, 2012).

⁵¹ I. William Zartman, "Introduction, Toward the Resolution of International Conflicts," in *Peacemaking In International Conflict, Methods & Techniques, Revised Edition*, ed. I. William Zartman (Washington D.C: United States Institute of Peace, 2007), 6.

However, the dynamics of The Gambia-Senegal interstate border tensions suit Zartman's views that the roles actors in a conflict play determines how easily it can be resolved, transformed, managed or prevented. The values and interests that parties to a conflict have, affect engagement, transformation and mediation of that conflict. Conflict transformation means, "...replacing conflict with positive relationships, such as satisfaction, cooperation, empathy, and interdependence between parties."⁵² The roles cross-border transporters play in The Gambia-Senegal border tensions partly reinforce Kaldor's views that "new wars" are mainly started and fueled by non-state actors, who seek to capture or access the state in order to exploit its resources for specific groups.⁵³

Using the concept of "new war" with caution, transporters have been generally driven by a desire to protect and pursue their economic interests around the cross-border transport links. They pressure the Gambian state to make certain tax /duty/ fee concessions on the ferry crossings and the cross-border routes to reduce their financial liabilities to the state. Their strategies to reduce their financial obligations to the state also fit Kaldor's views that in "new wars" non-state actors seek to monopolise the resources of the state and challenge the authority of the state for the interests of specific groups.

But there is a further caveat here: The transporters in The Gambia-Senegal border conflict do not belong to the state (Gambian); they are outsiders, and "foreign" to the state. As non- Gambian citizens, their conflict with the Gambian state cannot be termed as an intrastate conflict. They are actors who are also below the state and thus, their profiles do not fully fit Kaldor's description.

⁵²*Ibid*, 13.

⁵³Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era, Second Edition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007). Note that Kaldor's reference to "war" is used here with caution since the border conflict has not degenerated into a military confrontation. However, transporters motivation in this conflict is similar to the motivations of "war" actors Kaldor identified.

However, most transporters have cross-border social ties in both countries. There is a long-standing practice where people across both sides of The Gambia-Senegal border crisscross the border. They access public and social services such as health care, education and agricultural services from across the border. It is also common for people to randomly move border pegs from place to place. This has aided a random ability to belong to two countries. There are also strong perceptions that people from both countries originate from the same bloodlines but have been separated by borderlines. They share ethnicity and they have common first and last names. They also share religious beliefs, cultural practices and languages.

A “patchy” border and negotiated border practices aid transporters and other Senegambians to belong to both sides of the border even with the prevalence of “border enforcement or surveillance tools,” between the two countries.⁵⁴ Transporters’ cross-border identities and social networks can be described as transnational. But the ways they use their cross-border social ties deviates from some of the things Kaldor associates with non-state actors engaged in new wars. She notes that such actors are motivated by ethnic, religious or tribal influences. They are implicated in the formation of a war economy characterised by organised violence, illegal trade in weapons, drugs, diamonds or oil.⁵⁵ As primary actors who directly trigger The Gambia-Senegal border conflicts, transporters seek to protect and entrench their economic interests in the cross-border transport sector. But their goals do not appear to be influenced by ethnic, religious or tribal reasons. Moreover, so far, there is minimal “violence” in The Gambia-Senegal interstate border conflicts. Cross-border and interstate transport tensions have no trappings of a war economy, too.

Moreover, going by the conspiracy theory that Senegalese transporters front for the Senegalese state, in its “wars” against the Gambian state, they can be considered as Senegal’s part-time “mercenaries.” But the

⁵⁴Paul Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on The Ghana-Togo Frontier* (Ohio: Ohio University Press/ Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2002).

⁵⁵Violence is used here to denote the occurrence of physical violence and does not include psychological violence, which is implicit in The Gambia-Senegal border conflict.

validity of this conspiracy theory is questionable. Transporters' acts exhibit mixed motives and can be self-serving and therefore present further difficulties for Kaldor's thesis. Notwithstanding, their creative and contingent use of the border, and the resources they have in the state and in culture, have had transformative effects on The Gambia-Senegal border conflict. Analysing The Gambia-Senegal border crisis presents various theoretical difficulties, and this is why it makes sense to use an interdisciplinary and a culturalist approach to study it.

This study is not necessarily concerned with notions of conflict that are associated with violence. Rather, it is interested in highlighting how conflict can lead to positive outcomes in society. As shown in the various chapters of this work, people on both sides of the border found new sources of livelihoods from The Gambia-Senegal border crisis. That means the border conflict has productive outcomes for the state and for society. Thus, from the colonial period, the border intersected with culture and conflict to create new economic opportunities in society. As such, the next section explores how the colonial history still has relevance to The Gambia-Senegal border tensions.

1.7: Faulting the Border: a Social Pain

A recent line of "dissenting views" about the colonial borders in Africa absolves European colonisers from bearing the full blame for the burden of borders in postcolonial Africa.⁵⁶ Paul Nugent argues that the Africans were accomplices in the delineation of the colonial borders because partition followed, to some extent, the historic patterns of trade and the politics of the environment.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Paul, Nugent, "Border Anomalies - The Role of Local Actors in Shaping Spaces along the Senegal-Gambia and Ghana-Togo Borders" in *Beside The State Emergent Powers in Contemporary Africa*, edited by Alice Bellagamba and George Klute, (n/a) (Koln: Rudiger Koppe Verlag, 2008); Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists...2002*.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

In postcolonial Africa, colonial-era maps are enduring vestiges that help the postcolonial state lay claim to territories within its jurisdiction, especially in places with imprecise boundaries. Therefore, the modern-day justification of borders takes its spirit from maps, colonial tools that regulate claims and counter-claims on African territories in the nineteenth century. Sovereignty and territorial jurisdiction have been intimately linked with maps. The postcolonial boundaries can best be termed as discordant, since they were superimposed on already existing cultural landscapes.⁵⁸

This dissenting discourse on the logic of the post-colonial African borders is a long way from being settled. But it means that there is still more to learn and more to discover about African borders—especially in the post-colonial context, where sustainable development is an important part of the global and African agenda. A critical concern about the borders remains the fact that the nation-states that emerged as today's African countries represent European colonial rivalries, political and trade interests in the continent. This has resulted in geographic and institutional borders - territory, language, law and national administrative systems, inherited at independence and mostly maintained favourably in modern-day African countries by the political elites.⁵⁹

To some extent, the dissenting discourse on the African borders largely supports the ingenuity to study long-term continuities and discontinuities in social and political relations in Senegambia. However, this discourse does not use primordial arguments from the sociological literature as the basis for understanding The Gambia-Senegal cross-border and interstate relations. It focuses on collective identities and not ethnic affinities. Senegambia has historically been and remains a region where

⁵⁸Prescott described relations between boundaries and landscapes in terms of *antedecent*, *subsequent*, *consequent*, *superimposed* and *discordant*, or *relic*. See J.R. V. Prescott, *Political Frontiers and Boundaries* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 14.

⁵⁹See Asiwaju, *Partitioned Africans...1985*; Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works, Disorder as Political Instrument* (Oxford, Bloomington: James Currey, Indiana University Press: 1999); Jeffrey I. Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000). Paul Nugent, *Africa since Independence* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Hughes and Perfect, *The Political History...*; Senghor, *Senegambian Integration...*

ethnic pluralism is a defining feature. Thus, the culturalist approach adopted here encourages the mainstreaming of culture in studies that make the postcolonial territorial borders a key object of research in Africa. Using a culturalist approach also helps us to juxtapose the historical and cultural factors that have created continuities and discontinuities in cross-border and interstate relations in Senegambia. Thus, the next section looks at how culture and border studies theory blend to help us understand the peculiarities of The Gambia-Senegal border, cross-border and interstate relations.

1.8: The Gambia-Senegal One-ness Discourses and Border Studies Theory

The vicissitudes of The Gambia-Senegal bilateral relations over the border are shaped by two different national agendas: an agenda for independence for The Gambia and an agenda for “unification” for Senegal.⁶⁰ These respective agendas are partly driven by the colonial history. However, postcolonial developments have maintained the relevance of both agendas, which are embodied in the forms and types of institutions that define statecraft in each of the two countries. Consequently, each country’s agenda is manifested in the way it performs statehood at the border between the two countries. The border is a selective filter that enforces statehood, but socio-psychological dynamics transform The Gambia-Senegal border into a community one. The border agents of both countries act in two different capacities at the border: first as officials that enforce the state’s authority at the border and second, as the social state actors, who are ambassadors for cross-border cordiality. Their mixed roles come from the fact that state

⁶⁰ F. A. Renner, “Ethnic Affinity, Partition And Political Integration In Senegambia,” in *Partitioned Africans, Ethnic Relations Across Africa’s International Boundaries 1884- 1984*, ed. A. I. Asiwaju (London/ Lagos: C. Hurst and Company/ University of Lagos Press, 1985), 73; Fafa Edrissa M’bai, *A Senegambian Insight* (Surrey: Fafa E.M. M’bai & Unwin Brothers Ltd., 1992); Hughes and David Perfect, *The Political History...2006*; Senghor, *Senegambian Integration...2008*.

actors are both political and social beings and consequently they are subject to both state and non-state values and practices of society.

The political, economic, social, cognitive and religious processes that define The Gambia-Senegal bilateral relations are located within and outside state institutional frameworks. Therefore, it is important to use institutional lenses to analyse how activities at the border influence processes at the centre and how actions at the centre also influence practices at the border. However, I have no intention to stray into institutional theory as a core theory for this work. But since “political boundaries are human institutions,” and “[i]nstitutionalist theory provides a natural way to think about political boundaries,” I indulge my understanding of the border as an institution to better re-evaluate the roles the colonial borders play in interstate political discord in Senegambia.⁶¹

Borders are sites for changing interactions, growth areas for alternative markets and new irregular economic clusters in society.

State-society complexes are also well pronounced at borders.⁶² Therefore, their social and political dimensions can exude different forms of conflicts in society as various actors use them for various ends.⁶³ This is why since the mid-1990s, borderland theorists study borders to redefine ideas about state-formation and power relations between the centre and the peripheries of the state. Accordingly, recent developments in Borderland Studies investigate borders as “social constructions,” that exercise the control, protection and

⁶¹Beth A. Simmons, “Rules over Real Estate: Trade, Territorial Conflict, and International Borders as Institutions,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, (Dec, 2005): 843.

⁶²Veena Das and Deborah Poole, eds, *Anthropology in the Margins of the State* (Santa Fe, Oxford: School of American Research Press, James Currey, 2004); [Janet Roitman, *Fiscal Disobedience Anthropology of Economic Regulation in Central Africa* \(Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005\).](#)

⁶³Benedikt Korf and Timothy Raeymaekers, ed., *Violence on the Margins, State Conflict, And Borderlands* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 4-11.

the barrier functions of the state.⁶⁴ This view of borders has implications for various academic disciplines. For instance, in geography, the concern is about the interaction of territories. In anthropology, the focus is on identities, in sociology, it is about social relations and in economics, markets. In environmental studies, the concern is about environments and in political science it is about governance.⁶⁵ Broadly speaking, these disciplinary concerns about borders generally concentrate on border-centred systems, norms, practices and behaviour modes, which define institutionalised appropriation of borders.

There is a tendency to use an interdisciplinary approach to studying borders. This broadens our perspectives about them, however, this approach constraints the development of a rigorous border theory. But after careful analysis of The Gambia-Senegal border, it is justified to use an interdisciplinary approach to understand its complex nature. This can help us to better appreciate the social and political dimensions of the border.

Attempts to build-theory in Borderland Studies largely focus on the governance aspects of the border. This approach centers on the “Institutional management of actors” and on “markets and identities.” It also looks at social processes in cross-border cooperation or competition, market relations, trading networks, social relations and identities.⁶⁶ “The focus of governance-based theories is, in fact, the relationship between actors and institutions in border integration processes.”⁶⁷ But this theory-building attempt has been criticised by some scholars who note that it is informed by a narrow and a subjective view of borders. However, irrespective of the disciplinary lenses one uses to study borders, the fact remains that borders

⁶⁴David Newman and Anssi Passi, “Fences and Neighbours in Postmodern World: Boundary Narratives in Political Geography.” *Progress in Human Geography*, (1998): 186-207.

⁶⁵Harlan Koff, “Putting ‘Power’ into Borderland Studies, Bringing the State Back,” in *Theorizing Borders through Analyses of Power Relations*, ed. Peter Giles *et al*, (Bruxelles, BEL: Peter Lang, 2015), 9.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

create different interests. They also create a sense of difference between communities divided by the borderline. At the same time, they can also nurture a sense of sameness among cross-border communities. For instance, Englund discovered that populations located at the Dedza-Angoni borderland villages considered the displaced persons they assisted during the RENAMO-FRELIMO Mozambican war, as their kinsmen, and used kinship terminology to refer to them.⁶⁸ This resonates with Miles' view that in most African contexts, the border assumes a kind of impermanence in the minds of populations. Thus, it contests the territorial agenda of the state.⁶⁹

As political space, the border classifies populations in order to govern them by demarcating competing spheres of authority. Oscar J. Martinez argued that, "at the level of international relations, boundaries have always been a source of trouble, although the nature and degree of conflict have varied from border to border."⁷⁰ There are old notions that borders are "front lines." They must be guarded against the intrusion of undesirable people and influences. But this view of borders has gradually receded.⁷¹

However, the impression that the world is rapidly moving towards globalised interdependent systems is an incomplete description of the world. Different countries have imposed different restrictions on the movement of goods and people within and outside their borders. The on-going "backway" phenomenon continues to claim the lives of countless numbers of West African youths, who strive to migrate to Europe through the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea. This shows that borders are still important tools used to exclude other people from given territories or spaces. The "backway" migration has had disastrous outcomes for many African youths. But people continue to embark on "backway" migrations in order to get to Europe. For globalisation theorists, this confirms that the future of the nation-state is

⁶⁸Harri Englund, *From War to Peace on the Mozambique-Malawi Borderland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002).

⁶⁹William F. S. Miles, "Development, Not Division: Local versus External Perceptions of the Niger- Nigeria Boundary," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, (June, 2005).

⁷⁰Oscar J. Martinez, ed., *Across Boundaries, Transborder Interaction in Comparative Perspective* (El Paso, Texas: Texas Western Press, 1986), 2.

⁷¹*Ibid.*

threatened and borders are meant for crossing.

Postmodernist thinkers celebrate the end of borders as it signifies globalisation.⁷² But in postcolonial Africa, like in most other parts of the world, borders continue to proliferate. They hold vast significance for populations and states they separate. What matters in the state derives from the borders and what passes through borders end somewhere that matters. As such, borders deserve critical attention irrespective of the disciplinary lense one seeks to use in understanding their functions and roles within the state and in interstate relations.

“Border studies have become significant themselves because scholars and policy-makers alike have recognised that most things that are important to the changing conditions of national and international political economy take place in borderlands.”⁷³ But whether scholars continue to study borders or not, daily, ordinary people face the impacts of the border and they devise strategies to encounter it. This is why it is relevant to understand borders for:

“their political nature and their depth. Political means their relation to the power centre, the strength of the force and authority behind them, the degree of enforcement that sustains them, the will and capacity to maintain the artificial division running through a populated area.”⁷⁴

In terms of depth, the border elicits different responses from individuals and the state and it can be subject to various border-bending practices. Thus, this research situates itself in border studies and appreciates a broad sense of borders as zones of interaction and cooperation.⁷⁵ It also views borders as contestations and markers of political sovereignty of the state.⁷⁶ Additionally, it nurtures a sense of borders as frontiers of circulation and flows and sites of inclusion and exclusion within the state.⁷⁷

⁷² David Newman and Anssi Passi, “Fences and Neighbours ...,” 1998.

⁷³ Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, ed., *A Companion to Border Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2012), 1.

⁷⁴ I. William Zartman, ed., *Understanding Life in the Borderlands, Boundaries in Depth and in Motion* (Athens, London: The University of Georgia Press, 2010), 6.

⁷⁵ Asiawaju, *Partitioned Africans...*; Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists...*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Herbst, *States...2000*; Das and Poole, ed., *Anthropology in the Margins...* 2004.

⁷⁷ Janet Roitman, *Fiscal Disobedience Anthropology of Economic Regulation in Central*

These different descriptions of the border make it a resource and a site for conflict. Its political economy can either promote or impede relations of production. The borders also signify contestations of material and conceptual boundaries where state, national and local identities converge.⁷⁸ In border settings where kinship ties frame social and economic relations, deep-rooted social and/ or religious values can shape people's perception of it. Thus, in Senegambia, the natural links between The Gambia and Senegal lessen the pain of the border.

The border cuts through "culture areas" but a fluid cross-border ethnic identity has forged economic, social and political citizenship in Senegambia.⁷⁹ Individuals re-conceptualise their political, economic and social systems to create continuities across the limitations of the border to milk opportunities from it.⁸⁰ Thus, social citizenship overrides the divisive nature of the border. It reflects power dynamics in society and the different power relations among different actors.

Power relations like social ones, are also fluid. Using them to better understand the border is not helpful for our case here. Therefore, it would be instructive to use Berry's approach to studying African agrarian change, by using historical and anthropological reasoning, which better reflect fluidity of social processes, and in this case, the fluidity of the border and relations connected to it. Hence, we should note that law is social process and border administration rules are subject to different interpretations (see chapters 2 & 6). Transactions also have multiple meanings and exchange "can be open-ended and multidimensional rather than single-stranded and definitive," (see chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7).⁸¹ We focus on the historical and the cultural factors that frame people's understanding of the border and the practices of the state at the border to show that the border like culture is

Africa (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005); Zeller, "Neither Arbitrary,"...; Joan McGregor, *Crossing the Zambezi: the politics of a Central African Frontier*, (Suffolk: James Curry of Boydell and Brewer Ltd., 2009).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ The term "culture areas" is borrowed from Asiwaju, *Partitioned Africans...* 1985.

⁸⁰ Das and Poole, ed., *Anthropology in the Margins...* 2004.

⁸¹ Berry, *No condition is permanent...* 1993, 13.

dynamic. People constantly revisit their relations to both the border and culture as they confront their daily realities.

Culture like the border stands for many things and provides convenience for different people to anchor their actions or practices in ways that can connect them with other people. Social practices promote claims that de-legitimise the barrier functions of The Gambia-Senegal border. These practices compete with the state's territorial agenda but the mind-set behind them is also inherent in the state. This is why in border disputes, states marshal useful technical, historic, economic, legal and cultural arguments to lay claim on disputed territories or conduct bilateral negotiations to settle border disputes.⁸² Human agency and choice shape the political economy of the border and relations around it. This is reflected in Williams' idea that in international politics,

[P]olitical structures are importantly, if not almost entirely, ideational, rather than material, and thus, the product of human agency...If the nature, meaning and role of, for example, territorial borders are not determined by some material structure, but are instead the result of a long series of human choices and decisions, ...it is both reasonable and necessary to examine the thinking that saw some choices taken over others...⁸³

Social ideas about the border are embedded in deep-rooted social and religious values, which rationalise social interactions. They shape the latitude to freely draw meaning from culture, which offers a pragmatic way of theorising the ways Senegambian social practices challenge "the established roles and functions of territorial borders."⁸⁴ The way social ideas are put to practice makes it useful to use institutions, as a concept, for understating how culture and history interact with The Gambia-Senegal borders to create conditions of harmony and conflict in cross-border, interstate and state-society relations. Here, the term "institutions" stands for organisations or other more formalised arrangements within and of the state, and includes "social institutions such as behavioral norms, routines, and

⁸² Prescott outlined processes of boundary negotiation; see Prescott, *Political Frontiers*, 24 and 198.

⁸³ Williams, *The Ethics of ...* 2006, 9.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 7.

various forms of relational interdependencies,” which Koff terms as informal.⁸⁵ Institutional change affects political and economic relations in society. Change upsets organisational processes, some people gain and others lose from it and this causes conflict among people, as evident in the cross-border realm (see chapters 4 & 5).

In an institutional setting where rational choice theoretical assumptions shape behaviour and economic decisions such as in cross-border transport, cooperation and conflict exist in social interactions as actors compete to make more profits. Douglass C. North observed that in the transport, agriculture and banking sectors, groups can cooperate to benefit from prospects for higher profits and higher returns on their investments.⁸⁶ Thus, individuals seek to optimise their utilities during transactions. North’s view resonates with the neoclassical and Marxist theory, both of which treat culture and power “as exogenous or subordinate to economic systems and processes.”⁸⁷ The unbridled market competition in Senegambia’s cross-border automobile transport, *Jakarta*, and border foreign currency trade sectors’ validate these views (see chapters 4 & 5). This implies that there are limits to using a culturalist approach to understand how the political economy of The Gambia-Senegal border affects interstate relations in Senegambia. However, economic relations in the cross-border fisheries trade and in the cross-border trade sector indispensably embed themselves in socio-cultural processes and norms and thus sustain the validity of the culturalist approach employed in this research (see chapter 6). From this perspectives, we can argue that “Culture and politics neither imitate nor distort economic activity: all three are interrelated dimensions of social processes.”⁸⁸

Social processes rationalise human interactions and the market. They provide the institutional bases for economic relations in society. As such, we

⁸⁵Giles et al, ed., *Theorizing Borders*, 17.

⁸⁶Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁸⁷See Berry, *No condition is permanent...* 1993,11.

⁸⁸*Ibid*, 13.

should understand institutions to mean “...the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction.”⁸⁹ As “humanly devised constraints,” institutions produce cognitive reflexes manifested in decisions, behaviour and choices of individuals engaged in social transactions. But this view, like theories of political behaviour since the 1950s, ignore the roles of non-economic moral sentiments that influence certain normative standards in societies like the Senegambia, where deep-rooted indigeneous understandings of relatedness shape social attitudes.⁹⁰

To understand The Gambia-Senegal relations, it is necessary to enquire what roles institutions play for the individual, group or society. In other words, what are politicians, transporters, traders and religious networks trying to accomplish in cross-border relations and why? This view can offer answers to why tension and harmony exist side-by-side in cross-border and interstate relations. Paul Nugent and Alice Bellagamba both observed that in Senegambia, social alliances override political fractures.⁹¹ This observation captures how basic cultural principles deployed through language overcome the barrier functions of The Gambia-Senegal border. As such, the next section identifies the ways the approach adopted in this study makes contributions to academic debates.

1.9: Contribution to Academic Debates

By answering the broad questions about The Gambia-Senegal cross-border, interstate and state-society relations, this thesis contributes to academic debates on how the political economy of the border interacts with local cultures to shape various experiences of the border. Parts of the work reinforce neoclassical and Marxist views that culture and power are

⁸⁹ North, *Institutions...* 1993, 3.

⁹⁰James C. March, and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1989).

⁹¹See Nugent, “Border Anomalies...”2008; Alice Bellagamba, “On the Virtue of Margins - A Story of Conflict between Government and Muslim Leadership in Post-1994 Gambia, in *Beside the State Emergent Powers in Contemporary Africa*, ed. Alice Bellagamba and George Klute, (n/a), (Koln: Rudiger Koppe Verlag, 2008).

subordinate to economic systems. However, it argues that culture provides a more practical way of theorising how Senegambian social practices challenge the functions and roles of the border as a political structure. The thesis is organised around three main assumptions. First, people adopt creativity and contingency to use the resources they have in culture, the state, trade, and religion to navigate the complex context of The Gambia-Senegal border. Kinship metaphors and social idioms of relations are carried over in cross-border relations, feeding notions of reciprocity in different forms of relations. Secondly, different forms of nuances shape state-society relations in Senegambia. Thirdly, tensions over the border can have productive outcomes. Border closures hinder cross-border mobility, but evidence shows that their effects contribute to the growth of new cross-border or border-based economic opportunities for people.

Critically, this research is about relationships. It studies relations that have different goals and happen in different contexts. The findings of this work can therefore be redefined to fit a number of theories on social and interstate relations in Africa. In particular, the focus on religious networks provides new insights into the worldviews of the Tijanniya sect and how their religious practices foster cross-border bonds in Senegambia. The focus on cross-border trade also provides insightful knowledge on how traders who trade in different goods relate to the border, society and the state.

Research on border transport in Africa has been rare. One of the most notable scholarly works that looks at transport infrastructure and its relations to borders is Joann McGregor's book, *Crossing the Zambezi, The Politics of Landscape on a Central African Frontier*. My work similarly discusses transport infrastructure and crossing the Gambia River; however, its central focus is on automobile transport. McGregor's work is based in Central Africa; mine is situated in West Africa. Focusing on the automobile sector as an institution that interacts with other institutions like trade, religion and politics also sets my work apart from hers. The workings of the cross-border transport sector further validate notions that economic systems can

sometimes have greater influence on people's behaviour when compared to cultural ones and power dynamics in society.

The focus on bilateral relations and the state also provides insightful knowledge. It identifies that the interests and the agenda of the state hardly change. However, the means of pursuing the almost "permanent" interests of the state keeps evolving. This has implication for international relations theory since the agenda of the state is fairly stable over the long term. Therefore, this insight offers new understandings into social conduct, economic and political behaviour, social and interstate political relations in Africa. It contributes to debates on the relationships between borders, politics, power, culture and economics. By revisiting claims of sameness and differences that are played out in The Gambia-Senegal relations, it takes the Senegambia discourse a step further and has wider implications for the wider Senegambia region. But the research methodology employed determines to what extent the goal of this research has been achieved with much success.

1.10: Methodology

The data for this thesis was drawn from a broad range of sources. The purpose of adopting a multi-sited mixed research method is to capture both qualitative and quantitative data on trade, transport and in other domains. These sources included a multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork, in which I used formal and informal interviews. I also used written sources such as newspapers and relevant official state documents. Additionally, I captured personal data on some of our interviewees such as their age, gender, origin, the frequency of trips individuals make across the border, their final destinations and the reasons for their travel. The reason for using this approach is for me to effectively capture level-one phenomena (lower politics). Hence, I focused on people engaged in cross-border trade, transportation and religious networks, state and local authorities at the border and also cross-border religious sites and events in Senegal. My second interest was to study level-two phenomena (high politics), which

targeted political actors in Banjul and Dakar, respectively. Border level and national level data have equal validity for this research. If we are to fully understand the dynamics of The Gambia-Senegal cross-border and interstate relations, the dynamics of conflict and how people use creativity and contingency to navigate the complex context of the border, we need data from these two levels.

The tools I used included participant observation, questionnaires, small-scale quantitative surveys on transport, and structured and semi-structured interviews, which included the collection of the life stories that are reflected throughout the thesis.

The research strategies were both inductive and abductive.⁹² The inductive strategy usefully described and identified patterns of relations among individuals and socio-economic and political phenomena in transport, trade, religious networks and the border itself. Since abductive research strategies unlike the inductive research, can accommodate both “what” and “why” questions and can explain social phenomena, it was useful for my focus on the use of language in cross-border relations.

I interpreted metaphors and social idioms to penetrate meanings, behaviour, motives and intentions in cross-border communication. These helped me access the “largely tacit mutual knowledge, the symbolic meanings, intentions and rules, which provide the orientations for their actions” (transporters, traders, politicians, religious and other actors). It also justified the culturalist approach and the research methodology that guided this work.⁹³ Using institutions to guide my understanding of social and political processes, gives this research a potential to generate theory, although this is secondary at this stage.

⁹²Blake notes that the inductive research strategy may establish patterns in the data but may not give explanation to social phenomena. See Norman Blaikie, *Designing Social Research*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010); Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research Design and Methods* (London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, International Educational and Professional Publisher, 1994).

⁹³Blaikie, *Designing Social...2010*, 107.

Ethnographic data for this research was collected during a six-month long fieldwork at the Karang-Amdallai, Farrafenni-Keur Ayib borders (main study sites) and in Dakar and Kaolack. The fieldwork was from January-June, 2013. Additionally, ethnographic data was collected at the Seleti-Giboroh border areas of the two countries. My six-month field visit started in Dakar, where I spent the second week of my arrival developing contacts with relevant Dakar-based government officials, and through Dakar contacts, with state border agents and also some key community leaders at the border study sites.

The border fieldwork component started in earnest at the Karang-Amdallai borders. I was more familiar with this border site and starting there helped me to compare what I discovered there with what I found at the other case-study sites- the Keur Ayib-Farrafenni and Seleti-Giboroh borders.

Amdallai-Karang like Farrafenni-Keur Ayib is a high-density border site that directly connects to the two capital cities, Banjul and Dakar. Giboroh-Seteti has significant traffic too, as the major transit point that connects the B3 axis - Banjul, Bignona and Bissau. From Casamance and through the Gambian border village of Giboroh, it connects to Brikama, the second most populous town in The Gambia, located about thirty-five kilometers from Banjul.

I spent my first two days trying to meet the head of the Senegalese Douane post located in Karang, but kept missing him. I was obliged to spend most of my time with the Deputy Mayor of Karang, whose boss, Mayor Ousmane Sene, was my "host." Deputy Mayor Diop helped to link me up with interviewees and he also accompanied me to conduct interviews where possible. After I felt comfortable with my new surroundings, I independently arranged to have interviews with people. Border state agents at Karang were also very helpful in linking me with other interviewees. This connection gave me full access to officials, official data on the borders and hospitality for the entire duration of my fieldwork at the border.

From January to early mid-February 2013, I used a mini-digital tape recorder to conduct interviews. I also used garage band from my MacBook Pro laptop to back-up the interviews. But after my laptop crashed, I depended on the recorder and the field notebook I used to write field observations. I spent many hours at the Karang and Keur Ayib police posts interviewing selected border crossers and recording data from their travel documents. I also accessed the daily official records on border crossers, which included European tourists who crossed the border. Additionally, I accessed records on the categories of vehicles that crossed from both directions of the border. I also distributed questionnaires to interested members of the Association of *Jakarta* drivers/riders in Karang and they completed them. These questionnaires were intended to elicit “trip diaries,” from drivers.

For a week, they recorded the number of trips they undertook daily, and the gender and the age of the person(s) they carried for each trip. The diaries were useful for knowing how much money *Jakarta* drivers made daily and for knowing the categories of people who generally used *Jakartas* in Karang. The results and quality of the trip diaries were mixed. But I was able to collate some kind of data from them.

Initially, I spent three weeks at each of the three case-study sites (Karang-Amdallai, Farafenni- Ker Ayib, and Seleti-Giboroh, respectively), rotating from one site to the other. The Seleti-Giboroh border was rich with exciting data. However, after evaluating the security risks involved in doing research there, and the difficulty of travelling there through Tamba Counda and Kolda, I regretfully dropped this case study after my initial visit there. But I resolved to use some of the interesting data I collected from there, when applicable in this study.

The fieldwork also took me to periodic and daily border and “underground” markets in the border Town of Kaolack and in Dakar, respectively. I visited private houses of cross-border traders, back-roads used by smugglers, border-crossing check points, border customs posts,

residences of some border enforcement agents and formal and informal local authority at the borders, border car parks and *Pompier*, the main car-park for cross-border transport in Dakar. I also attended religious events held at religious communities at the border. Additionally, I visited the Niassen community in Kaolack, too.

Due to personal safety issues, I could not go to The Gambia side of the border to personally conduct interviews there. But with the permission of my supervisors, I hired the services of a Gambia-based research assistant to assist with the data collection on The Gambian side of the border. From October- December 2012, I designed some research questions, which he administered to transporters, traders and religious actors on the Gambian side of the border. I also gave him a mini-digital tape recorder with which he recorded interviews with relevant individuals on that side of the border. We had two meetings in Karang and Dakar respectively, in order to review the questionnaires and the interviews he had conducted.

However, a good part of the data he collected was problematic. Most interview dates and place of interview were not recorded during interviews. I ended up having data that was almost useless for my purposes. However, because of the enormous amount of data I collected during my fieldwork, the research assistant's botched data collection did not obstruct this research.

My research also made significant use of archival materials on The Gambia and Senegal. In the summer of 2012, I conducted initial archival research on The Gambia-Senegal relations at the British Newspaper Library in Colindale, London. This research was complemented with archival research on both The Gambia and Senegal at the National Archives in Dakar, in 2013, and at the Boston University African Studies Library collections. Relevant archival documents were also accessed through interlibrary loan facilities between Boston University and other institutions namely, the Library of Congress, Northwestern University and Stanford.

Through the research assistant, I also received copies of relevant archival materials from the national archives in Banjul. Through personal

contacts, too, I was able to also access some internal documents of some relevant government institutions in The Gambia, which were scanned and emailed to me. I also read relevant public records and documents such as cross-border trade statistics from governments, minutes and memoranda from inter-governmental bodies such as the Senegalo-Gambia Permanent Secretariat, and ECOWAS, the sub-regional body that supports free-mobility and free-trade.

From 2012- 2014, in various instances, I had used Skype, email and face-to-face interviews with relevant informants on The Gambia-Senegal relations. These interviewees included B.B. Darboe, the former Vice President of The Gambia. For most part of this research and with a few exceptions, it has been difficult to get government officials on both sides of the border to openly share their views on The Gambia-Senegal relations. For example, attempts to interview officials of the Senegalese ministries of Foreign Affairs and Finance and Economic Affairs, respectively, failed. An official of the Foreign Ministry offered a classic excuse that: “relations between Senegal and The Gambia are very sensitive.”⁹⁴ However, I was able to discuss The Gambia-Senegal relations with some government officials and some notable Senegalese citizens. These people included former officials who served as ambassadors to The Gambia, or who worked as Senegalese government officials during the confederation. But they asked to be anonymous. I also faced similar reluctance from Gambian officials. However, I was able to have a Skype interview with an official of the Gambian Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs- in 2012.

Finally, since my enrolment in this study programme in 2011, I have consistently followed online media, paying attention to issues relating to The Gambia-Senegal relations. As a whole, the different approaches to getting data for this research were effective for analysing The Gambia-Senegal relations.

⁹⁴An informal chat with an official of the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 2013.

1.10.1: Strengths and Limitations

A major strength of this study is that it provides a systematic analysis of the political economy of The Gambia-Senegal border. It further studies the nuances of The Gambia-Senegal relations over the border and state-society relations. It also looks at relations among transporters, traders and religious actors. It offers insightful knowledge on Senegambian culture and it draws from deep-rooted social and religious values to strengthen its analysis. It used appropriate research methods to satisfactorily explore, describe and explain different social phenomena that are observable from the different case studies cited in this work. Irrespective of all these strengths that this work has, it is not without limitations. For example, as a Gambian citizen, I was not able to enter my country throughout the period of this research for personal safety reasons. I used a research assistant to collect data on the Gambian side of the border, but the data collected was not very useful for my purposes. This has limited my ability to extensively share stories from both sides of the border. But hopefully, this limitation can be addressed in future research on The Gambia-Senegal relations.

1.10.2: Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 has dealt with the introduction, research questions and rationale, conceptual frameworks, literature review and the methodology. Chapter 2 looks at bilateral relations and why there has been interstate misunderstanding between The Gambia and Senegal. It also describes border-crossing encounters and how they're shaped by Senegambian social thoughts. It introduces the Amdallai-Karang and Keur Ayib-Farrafenni border areas. After that, it discusses religious solidarity in Senegambia and the use of language. It also highlights how both state and non-state actors use the resources they have in culture, the state and in other domains to navigate the complex context of the border. The chapter prepares us for discussing the empirical chapters that follow. Chapter 3 discusses how state and non-state actors used the resources they have in culture to negotiate various

kinds of relations. It discusses the joint-transport network and its cross-border impacts. It also introduces the conflicts that would eventually lead to the break-up of the joint transport network. It flows into Chapter 4, where the break-up of the joint- transport network is highlighted. Chapter 5 discusses some of the productive outcomes of the break-up of the joint transport network. It shows how different non-state actors benefited from the break-up. It also discusses some of the tensions associated with the outcomes of the break-up. Chapter 6 provides case-based examples of how traders used the resources they have in the state, culture, transport and in other domains to enhance their cross-border trading interests. It also discusses some of the inherent tensions in trading and how traders creatively navigate those tensions, especially when they concern the border. Chapter 7 discusses how religious networks also creatively use the different resources at their disposal to entrench a sense of community across the border. It defines the meaning of community among religious networks and also the forms of social attachments that shape interpersonal and intergeneration connections among religious groups. This chapter, like all the other previous chapters, also discusses the nuances of state-society relations in Senegambia. Finally, chapter 8 is the conclusion of the thesis and it summarises the findings of this work.

CHAPTER 2

THE BORDER, INTER-STATE RELATIONS AND SOCIO-RELIGIOUS NOTIONS OF COMMUNITY

“Blood bonds have a strength that is never lost.”
(Wollof proverb).

“Those who are neighbours for long enough turn into kinsmen.”
(Wollof proverb).

2.0: Inter-State and Social Relations: Reasons for Misunderstandings

The Gambia-Senegal economic conflicts have colonial legacies. The British and the French had different economic policies in the two countries, both of which were peanut exporting economies.⁹⁵ In the post-colonial period, this interstate economic rivalry continued, fueling mistrust and competition between the leaders of the two countries. Hence, The Gambia-Senegal political difficulties over the border have recurred from 1960 to 2015.

In 1969, an editorial of The Gambia Echo Newspaper decried the unexplained postponement (for numerous times) of the Inter Ministerial Conference of The Senegalo/Gambian governments. Frustrated by its failure to drag The Gambia into establishing a Customs Union, Senegal imposed rigid border restrictions on goods from the country in order to cripple Gambian re-export trade. Additionally, it restricted Senegalese from travelling to The Gambia without authentic documents, which, according to the editorial, were hard to obtain in Senegal at that time. ⁹⁶ These 1969 border policy restrictions appeal to a “Weberian sense...” that the state has “...routine capacity to exercise ultimate authority within the territorial domain

⁹⁵On the groundnut trade see Boubacar Barry, *The Kingdom of Waalo, Senegal Before the Conquest* (New York: Diaspora Africa Press, 2012).

⁹⁶ “Editorial, Senegal-Gambia Relations,” *The Gambia Echo*, November 10, 1969, 2.

of sovereignty.”⁹⁷ This implies the Senegalese state can impose within its borders, rules and regulations that can hurt its neighbour, The Gambia. However, the later also has the capacity to retaliate in response to such acts, or even to initiate similar acts against Senegal. But the impact such unfriendly bilateral acts can have may be different from country to country.

The Senegalese state was the source of the 1969 border restrictions. However, from the year 2000 to 2015, we see that the Senegalese Transport Association was the source behind almost all border restrictions imposed on The Gambia-Senegal border (see chapters 3 & 4). The power to close or to open the border seemed to have shifted, with or without the Senegalese state’s support, and this created new conflict dynamics in The Gambia-Senegal relations.⁹⁸ But even in the midst of these new changes in bilateral relations over the border, the Senegambian social habit of using kinship language to articulate The Gambia-Senegal relations persists.

The recurrence of the interstate conflicts over the border implies that there are limits to the effectiveness of Senegambian one-ness discourses. State logics, and sometimes language itself can undermine the effectiveness of kinship discourses. As part of this chapter, I share border-crossing attitudes I witnessed at the Karang-Amdallai border in 2013, to show how both state and non-state actors use different resources to navigate the complex context of the border. The stories I will share also show the nuanced nature of state-society relations. Additionally, they show how conflict can have both productive and non-productive outcomes in society.

This chapter juxtaposes the way state logics have influenced the political economy of the border and the recurrence of interstate political difficulties side-by-side with social attitudes towards the border. The aim of taking this approach is to reveal the complex nature of interstate and state-

⁹⁷ Crawford Young, “The end of the Post-Colonial State in Africa? Reflections on Changing African Political Dynamics,” *African Affairs* (2004), 25.

⁹⁸ Kaldor notes that conflict dynamics can change and depending on the motivation of the different actors, the conflict might take on new features. This can also be observed in The Gambia-Senegal border conflict dynamics. See Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era, Second Edition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

society relations to highlight that The Gambia-Senegal bilateral and cross-border relations are complex and dynamic.

The chapter also introduces the main border case study sites of Amadallai-Karang and Farrafenni-Keur Ayib, respectively. The main themes - transport, trade and *talibee* (religious) networks are also introduced here. Each of these themes will be discussed in-depth in the subsequent chapters. The chapter also highlights how *wullere* or *kullere* has been useful in sustaining inter-personal, inter-group, intra-state and interstate relations in Senegambia. *Wullere* is a Senegambian socio-religious cultural idea that complements *dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye* relational ideas. *Dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye ties* are used as the background motif for analysing the set of relations that define Senegambian ties. As The Gambia-Senegal relations erratically move back and forth between phases of good and bad relations, *wullere* can be an additional glue to keep it from disintegrating. The reflections on *wullere* or *kullere* connect chapter 2 and chapter 1, where *dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye* notions were introduced.

Chapter 2 poses two questions: what institutional systems structure conflict and cooperation in interstate relations? What continuities and discontinuities influence Senegambian cross-border social and political systems, and The Gambia-Senegal political difficulties? These questions aim to identify the historical sources of cooperation and/ or conflict in cross-border, interstate and state-society relations. It argues that culture, trade and religion are domains where tensions can occur. However, these tensions are managed and handled well, and hardly produce violence. It further argues that transport connects goods and people together and therefore it promotes cross-border social harmony. But it is more disposed to causing interstate conflicts when compared with culture, trade and religion. How conflicts and cooperation play out in the domains of transport, trade and religion will be discussed in the subsequent parts of this chapter and in the rest of the chapters of the thesis, as highlighted below.

Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 are concerned with how the cultural and religious “theories” of social relations discussed in chapters 1 and 2 work or are manifested in practice. Some theories of social relations are contradicted by some practices in social and political exchanges. But this does not invalidate the essence of these theories. Instead, it points to the dynamism of human relations. It is helpful to keep in mind that as Berry suggested, in most economic and social exchanges in Africa, law is part of social processes, transactions can have multiple meanings and exchange can be multidimensional, open-ended and not definitive.⁹⁹ Thus, social theories can evolve. The focus on social theories and their practices make the chapters of this work, a body of related knowledge.

From the above introduction, the next section of the chapter discusses the state logics, which framed the national border policies of The Gambia and Senegal. Then, we discuss how state logics interact with social ones and the political economy of the border. After that, the chapter explores how the border settlements of Amdallai, Karang, Farrafenni and Keur Ayib were founded, to show how claims to community reified the international boundary. These new settlements became sites for the broadcasting of the state’s authority and reinforced the state’s territorial agenda. Their implications for interstate political conflicts are discussed before the conclusion of the chapter.

2.1. State Logics and the Border

When The Gambia and Senegal gained independence from British and French rule in 1965 and 1960, respectively, the two countries continued the colonial search for a solution to the two-country situation in Senegambia. The Gambia is wedged between Senegal and the Casamance. It inconveniences Senegal-Casamance communication and restricts Senegal from the full use of the waterways of the Gambia River.

⁹⁹Sara Berry, *No condition is permanent: the social dynamics of agrarian change in sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

The two countries commissioned the 1964 Van Mook study to advise them on their plan to reunite. The Van Mook report outlined three possible alternatives for the reunification project. But in the end, The Gambia and Senegal both decided to stay as separate countries. However, they signed a Treaty of Association, which established the Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat and an Inter-Ministerial Committee. They also signed a common agreement on Defense and Security (1965), which established a Joint Committee on Defence. These agreements and bodies framed interstate cooperation and ministers and the heads of state of the two countries met annually to discuss interstate issues.¹⁰⁰

Senghor argued that the colonial experience in The Gambia and Senegal shaped two major elite types who in language, behaviour, modes of thoughts and values took after the British and the French, respectively. The colonial experience also brought about differences in institutions-educational systems, administrative and justice systems, economic structures and policies.¹⁰¹ Both countries have mono-crop economies, where tourism is a major contributor to their GDPs. The Gambia has a modest industrial capacity. On the other hand, Senegal has made significant attempts to industrialise and has a growing production base in agriculture, industry, and services.¹⁰² In essence, the two countries have different state logics.

At independence, the Senegalese government monopolised its peanut trade, but this had a disastrous economic outcome. In 1968, France withdrew its subsidies to Senegal's peanut sector, which saw a 25 percent decrease in the producer price of the crop.¹⁰³ This harmed rural populations, who experienced low prices for their peanuts. Rural people

¹⁰⁰“Sir Dawda Throws Light on Recent Events,” *The Gambia News Bulletin*, November 25, 1980,

¹⁰¹Jeggan C. Senghor, *The Politics of Senegambia Integration 1958-1994, Africa In Development Vol. 1.* (Oxford/ Bern: Peter Lang, 2008).

¹⁰² See Catherine Boone, *Merchant Capital and the Roots of State Power in Senegal 1930-1985* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁰³ *Ibid*: P. Youm, “The Economy Since Independence,” in *The Political Economy of Senegal Under Structural Adjustment*, ed. Chris L. Delgado and Sidi Jammeh (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991)

were also affected by the lack of interest free loans, debt forgiveness and subsidised tools. Senegal suffered an economic crisis: a national budget deficit, increases in the price of basic food stuff and increases on duties on imports all contributed to the country's decision to reschedule Senegalese debt repayments from 1981-1984. The IMF sponsored a Medium-Term Economic Recovery Plan (EFRP) for the country, to ensure fiscal stability and sustained growth.¹⁰⁴

The Gambia's experience was similar to Senegal's, but it adopted policies that were different from the latter's. It crafted a re-export and a donor-driven economy, but that did not insulate it from the harsh economic realities of the early and late seventies.¹⁰⁵ In spite of the country's agenda on economic justice and equity, allegations of corruption in "high offices" and the 1972 butut scandal gradually eroded confidence in Jawara's government. Revolutionary elements and opposition parties protested the worsening and unstable economic conditions and called for the overthrow of the Jawara regime, for its failure to guarantee people's welfare and wellbeing.¹⁰⁶

In 1980, the Jawara regime faced threats from revolutionary elements. It invoked the 1960 defence pact under which the two countries agreed to defend each other against threats and Senegal deployed its soldiers under Operation Foday Kaba I, to maintain order in the country. The Gambia did not have a standing army at this period, but it had a sizable field force and a small police population. Again, in 1981, under Operation Foday Kaba II, Senegalese soldiers were deployed to repel rebels who attempted to overthrow Jawara.

¹⁰⁴C.M. Sommerville "The Impact of the Reforms on the Urban Population: How Dakarais view the Crisis," in *The Political Economy of Senegal Under Structural Adjustment*, ed. Chris L. Delgado and Sidi Jammeh (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991), 152- 162; Youm, "The Economy..." 1991.

¹⁰⁵ Omar A. Touray, *The Gambia and the World, A History of the Foreign Policy of Africa's Smallest State, 1965- 1995* (Hamburg: Institute of African Affairs, 2000).

¹⁰⁶ S. A. Bakarr, *The Gambia Mourns Her Image* (Banjul: Ker Nofla, 1983).

Economic and political insecurity in Senegambia brought the two countries closer. Senegal was an indispensable ally for Jawara's political survival. Senegal also hoped closer cooperation with The Gambia would appease its declining economy and the political unrest in Casamance.

In 1980, before political disturbances started in The Gambia, riots and student demonstrations broke out in Ziguinchor, the regional capital of Casamance. The region was seeking independence from Senegal based on a claim that in 1960, President Senghor promised to grant that to Casamance, after 22-years of nationhood with Senegal. They argued that the region has been disenfranchised by its nationhood with Senegal. It suffered massive economic problems, too. But there was a heavy-handed repression of demonstrators, which intensified the conflict.¹⁰⁷ An armed rebellion was full-blown with the establishment of the separationist rebel group the Movement for Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC), which demanded independence from Senegal.

When Senghor resigned as president of Senegal in January 1981 and Abdou Diouf succeeded him, the bad economic and political situation in both The Gambia and Senegal deepened. After the July 1981 military bailout of Jawara, the two countries formed the Senegambia Confederation in December, which was effective by February 1982.¹⁰⁸ This was at a time when both countries were affected by a debt crisis and serious budget deficit. Senegal also suffered from the significant number of Senegalese military casualties, who lost their lives in the process of restoring Jawara's rule. The Gambia paid one million dollar compensation to the families of the fallen soldiers, but this payout failed to improve the political dynamics in Senegal. The Confederation caused new expenditure lines for both governments. However, it was an expedient political move for the moment.

¹⁰⁷ C. Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance, Conquête et Résistance: 1850 -1920* (Paris: Editions Karthala, 1985); Pierre Englebert, "Compliance and Defiance to National Integration in Barotseland and Casamance," *African Spectrum*, Hamburg Institute of African Affairs at GIGA 40, 1(2005): 29- 59; Pierre Englebert, *Africa Unity, Sovereignty & Sorrow* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009).

¹⁰⁸Senghor, *The Politics of Senegambia...* 2008.

Senegal's "economic housecleaning" that resulted from structural adjustment caused substantial pain among its population. Its textile industry failed.¹⁰⁹ There were mass retrenchments from public and private enterprises. About 5,000 to 20,000 Senegalese became jobless overnight.¹¹⁰ The country faced increased pressure to stabilise its economy. The Senegalese soldiers who were deployed and later stationed in The Gambia restored order and subverted the agitation of revolutionary elements in the country, but Gambians continued to be disillusioned with Jawara. Additionally, Casamance separatist rebels continued their separatist agitation.

To respond to rising economic hardship, which was worsened by rapid population growth, Jawara's regime shifted its heavy investments in physical infrastructural projects to investments in productive sectors like agriculture. In the 1983 census, The Gambia's population totaled 696,000. Between 1973 and 1983, the population in Banjul doubled. Rapid rural-urban migration and migration from neighbouring countries like Senegal, shifted the country's demographics. By 1984, 20% of the population was concentrated in Banjul.¹¹¹ In 1985, under the Confederation, economic difficulties mounted in both The Gambia and Senegal. The latter kept pushing for the adoption of a custom union and a unified Senegambian government.

Publicly, the Senegalese government presented economic union with The Gambia "as a cost to it, rather than a benefit to itself." But in reality, if tariffs were equalised through the proposed customs union, The Gambia would lose significant customs revenue on imported goods. This would reconfigure the country's re-export trade. It would also raise the cost of living in The Gambia.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Boone, *Merchant Capital...* 1992.

¹¹⁰ Sommerville, "The Impact of..." 1991.

¹¹¹ The Gambia Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development, 1984:xii).

¹¹² Arnold Hughes and David Perfect, *A Political History of The Gambia 1816-199* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006).

As both countries faced their respective economic and social troubles, debates about the Confederation were heightened. Some leaders of the Peoples Progressive Party (P.P.P.- Jawara's party) criticised the Confederation for imbalance. They argued that the prediction that The Gambia would gain economic and social benefits from it was erroneous.¹¹³

Some Senegalese were also unhappy about the Confederation. In structural adjustment debates, they expressed dissatisfactions on how The Gambia's exchange rate was free of the restrictions of the Franc zone. They also queried that its trade policy amounted to an illicit free transit of trade to Senegal. They further argued that between 1986- 1989, The Gambia's economic policies had made Senegal to lose about CFAC 20 billion per annum. But in real terms, this figure was about one percent or even less of Senegal's GDP.¹¹⁴

Irrespective of national resistance to the Confederation, the economic conditions, which prevailed in both countries, made it difficult for the two countries to adopt common economic policies towards unification. The implementation of structural adjustment policies led to a drastic devaluation of national currencies. There was inflation in each country and this led to import liberalisation and consequently, indigenous industries degenerated. The cost of imports was high. There was capital flight and the retrenchment of traditional exports. All these perpetuated dependence on foreign imports especially for basic commodities.¹¹⁵ Amidst such economic chaos and as life prospects continued to dwindle in Casamance, The Gambia became more and more disillusioned with Senegal's push for economic integration and unification. Gambians were further disenchanted with the Confederation when in 1985 the Senegalese high commissioner in Banjul ordered Senegalese forces to use force to crush disturbances at a football match at the Independence Stadium in Bakau. The Jawara regime was offended by

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Toure 1989 quoted in Chris L. Delgado and Sidi Jammeh, ed. *The Political Economy of Senegal Under Structural Adjustment* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991).

¹¹⁵ Claude Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa* (Washington, D.C: The Brooking Institute, 1996): 31-41

this lack of respect and it immediately asked for the recall of the Senegalese ambassador.¹¹⁶ From Gambian perspectives, the Bakau incident, the economic uncertainties and the lingering rebellion in Casamance were strong signals that it was a bad idea to unify with Senegal.

In short, The Gambia and Senegal adopted different measures to confront their national economic and political difficulties. Their bilateral relations were affected by their national concerns. Consequently, each country adopted policies that were designed to protect its interests. Those policies were sometimes in direct opposition to the other country's goals. This reality caused a series of misunderstandings in interstate relations. In addition to economic and political misunderstandings, historical pressures also lingered in bilateral relations further deepening interstate misunderstandings. The next section explores those historical pressures that undermined interstate relations.

2.2. Pressures of History in Senegambia

Colonial governance in The Gambia and Senegal created serious ruptures in interstate relations. In the postcolonial period, these ruptures were exacerbated by national economic hardships and the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes in both countries. Like most adjusting African economies, the Gambian and Senegalese economies contracted in the 1980 and 1990s. Population growth and a declining economy caused social strife in both countries.¹¹⁷ The hardship that came with adjustment had a human face. It impacted social relations and the political systems of adjusting countries. Popular demand for improved economic conditions were common in almost all adjusting countries. As the agricultural sector slumped, rural-urban migration increased. In Senegal, this led to rural people moving to Dakar and its suburbs to seek better economic prospects. Other

¹¹⁶ Hughes and Perfect, *A Political History...*, 2006

¹¹⁷ Paul Nugent, *Africa Since Independence* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004): 334.

Senegalese also migrated to other countries in the sub-region notably The Gambia and Ivory Coast.¹¹⁸

Due to the effects of demographic transition, Senegal experienced more crisis than The Gambia. It had a larger population and a bigger discontent in its population. Hence, when adjustment hit Senegal hard, some Senegalese including prostitutes migrated to The Gambia. The Gambia implemented various social solidarity initiatives that effectively kept rural people in rural areas.¹¹⁹

For long, Gambians were worried that Senegal's economic crisis and the Casamance rebellion may spillover to their country. They were also worried about losing the economic edge the re-export trade had given them over Senegal and other West African countries. Hence, the country was reluctant about forming a customs union with Senegal. The country's security concerns were activated as its border communities suffered from the hit and run activities of the Casamance rebels. It was also affected by the huge influx of refugees in the country. Moreover, in 1989, Senegal had border conflicts with both Mauritania and Guinea Bissau, respectively. She expected The Gambia to be an ally in these conflicts. But the Jawara regime sought to be a neutral party in these conflicts. It viewed that Senegal and Mauritania should engage in dialogue and not use military confrontation to settle their border dispute.

When the conflict broke-out between Senegal and Mauritania, The Gambia gave refuge and assistance to nationals of both countries affected by the conflict. It was under these circumstances that Senegal unilaterally withdrew its soldiers that were stationed in The Gambia as part of the Confederation agreement. This paved way for the collapse of the Confederation. The Gambian decision to be a neutral party in the interstate conflicts was part of a broad national policy, which saw the Jawara regime play the role of a bridge to West Africa's language blocks. It adopted a

¹¹⁸ Delgado and Jammeh, *The Political Economy...*, 1991.

¹¹⁹ Richard A. Shroeder, *Shady Practices, Agroforestry and Gender politics in The Gambia* (Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, Berkeley, 1980).

middle-way, non-aligning approach to international relations; the country also nurtured “long-established relations with leaders across the ideological and linguistic divide.”¹²⁰ Its foreign policy was the clear opposite of Senegal’s, and this became another source of misunderstanding in interstate relations.

Geographic concerns were also a dilemma for The Gambia-Senegal bilateral relations, in addition to concerns over economic situations, security issues and foreign policy directions. The constraints The Gambia’s geography caused to Senegal-Casamance communication, made it hard for Senegal to effectively tackle the insurgence in Casamance. This issue became a serious dent in interstate relations as The Gambia opted for a neutral role in the Senegal-Casamance conflict and resisted any attempts by Senegal to use its territory to fight rebels. The relationship was further complicated by the fact that, as a political ruse, Casamance rebels identify themselves more with The Gambia, especially under former president Yahya Jammeh.

Many people from The Gambia and Casamance share deep social and language ties. Kolda, Seydio and Pakaaw regions of Senegal speak the same Mandinka dialect like the one spoken in The Gambia. Mandinkas are the dominant population in The Gambia. This sense of Mandinka kinship ties is similar to the kinship ties between Jola populations in the two countries. The Jolas are the majority population in Casamance, and also in The Gambia’s Foni region. As such, Casamance shares stronger language and ethnic ties with The Gambia, than with north-west and east Senegal, even though Malinke, another Mandinka dialect, is spoken in eastern Senegal. However, ethnic differentiation is not a useful marker for analysing Senegalo-Gambian political dynamics, but it is important to flag out these cultural and linguistic dynamics, to show the complex nature of The Gambia-Senegal relations.

¹²⁰ Touray, *The Gambia and ...* 2000; Hughes and Perfect, *A Political History...*, 2006.

The Gambia and Casamance have also had a long enduring history of socio-cultural exchange between their peoples. Seydio band, like Lalo Kebba Drammeh, are cultural symbols for both Gambians and Casamance people and by extension for other Senegal, too. Both The Gambia and Casamance were also part of a powerful Mandinka dominion called the Kabu Kingdom, which extended to territories in modern-day Guinea Bissau. Moreover, "Casamancais and dissidents in The Gambia have often collaborated in the past, and are more likely to do so if they feel mutually oppressed."¹²¹ These past ties between the people from the two places endure to the present times.

Different narratives of local oral histories have been useful in fostering a sense of unity between Gambians and people from Casamance. But besides social identities, colonial rule had left obvious dents in the way people perceive their political realities. "The separate political identity of these peoples..." caused an "... unavoidable interference with otherwise similar economic interests..." in Senegambia.¹²² But given that colonial rule has not upset social relations among the people of Senegambia, the Casamance conflict has become a political dilemma for interstate relations.

The Gambia-Casamance close relations have been motivated by economic logics, too. The porous border between the two countries makes it easy for the latter to import cheap goods from The Gambia. It also markets its agricultural products there. As a region, Casamance is rich in agricultural and other resources. It is of great economic value to Senegal, too. But the rebellion has made it difficult for Senegal to exploit Casamance's full potential. Therefore, it has been in dire need for The Gambia's cooperation in aiding its way against the Casamance rebellion.

As a self-declared neutral party in the Senegal-Casamance conflict, The Gambia cannot let Senegal use its territory to tackle rebels. This

¹²¹ L. C. Philips, 'The Senegambia Confederation,' in *The Political Economy of Senegal Under Structural Adjustment*, ed. Chris L. Delgado and Sidi Jammeh (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991): 192.

¹²² The Government of The Gambia/Senegambia Secretariat, *The 1968 Senegambian Transport Survey Proposal* (Bathurst: The Senegambia Secretariat, 1968).

reluctance and other issues have made Senegal to be suspicious of Gambian intentions in Casamance. The Gambia's positions on the Casamance rebellion and other political concerns in interstate relations linger and torment The Gambia-Senegal relations.

The attempt to identify how the logics of the two states affect their bilateral relations show that The Gambia-Senegal interstate misunderstandings are complex and multifaceted. This further justifies the use of the culturalist approach to determine the nature of interstate conflicts over the border and the effects the use of kinship metaphors and social idioms of relations have on interstate relations. To that end, the next section will focus on interstate cooperation to show that amidst conditions of conflict, the two states can still cooperate in recognition of the deep social bonds between their peoples. In the next section, we will also discuss contemporary state-society nuances to show that both interstate and state-society relations are complex.

2.3. Nuances of State-Society Relations: the Power of Shared Meanings

In the previous sections, we've discussed how state logics contributed to interstate misunderstandings that survived the colonial, independence and postcolonial periods. In this section, we will discuss how different levels of contemporary state-society relations thrive through both misunderstanding and compromise. The interactions between border administrators and border crossers at The Gambia-Senegal border provide insightful examples of the nuanced nature of state-society relations. We will discuss some border crossing stories, their effects on cross-border solidarity and on conflict and compromise in state-society and interstate relations.

David Coplan argued that attitudes that border crossers show to border administrative agents are part of strategies to deceive border control

and to enact attitudes border officials want to see.¹²³ These selected border-crossing stories I share below confirm Coplan's view that border administration and border crossing are performative acts. The stories, all of which took place at the Karang-Amdallai border, were witnessed during my 2013 (January- June) fieldwork at The Gambia-Senegal border. The stories begin:

It was a humid early afternoon in March. I was at the Amdallai-Karang border, sitting under the veranda of the Senegalese border police's office in Karang. The tropical sun glared outside, its heat intense, overpowering. Beads of warm sweat trickled down my face, like a dripping fountain. The crowd that earlier hustled and bustled and flowed through the border checkpoint suddenly vanished, their faded presence now a dull mirage. The heat seemed to drain people's keenness to cross the border. A group of five Gambian girls between the ages of 18- 22 suddenly emerged from the Gambian side of the border. They walked into Karang, resolutely avoiding the Senegalese border police officer, who stood in front of the police post, checking the identity cards (IDs) of the few crossers who slowly filed through the border.

In a husky male voice, the police summoned them in Wollof to come check-in with him. The girls made an abrupt turn to the left side of the road where the police post was located. Standing in front of the police, one of them said,

Girl 1: "We are from Keur Sanyang (a Gambian border village about five kilometers from the border). We are going nowhere, just stopping in Karang to get our clothes from the tailor. We have a wedding."

Police: "You have to show your IDs, if you do not have them, you will not go anywhere." The police was firm.

Girl 2: "No problem. If you prevent us from going, we'll wait for your lunch."

¹²³David B. Coplan, "Border Show Business and Performing States," in *A Companion to Border Studies*, T. M. Wilson and H. Donnan, eds, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2012).

In one heavy heap, the girls sat on the long wooden bench, which was stationed on the left side of the main entrance to the police post. They giggled among themselves. Without second thoughts, the officer asked them to proceed, but warned them to have their IDs next time. The girls happily walked away towards the center of town (end of story).

Another day in March. The dull flicker of the early evening sun and its mild heat gradually gave way to nightfall. A group of middle-aged Gambian and Senegalese women were crossing the border from Karang to Amdallai. They were part of a large group of crossers who activated the sluggish mid-afternoon traffic. Some of the women crossed the border without problems. But a few of them did not have IDs to pass. Their excuse was that they hastily left their homes to attend a funeral in Dakar. The police let them pass, but warned them to bring along their IDs next time. One of the women said to him:

Woman: “You are right. We need to carry our IDS with us. However, we too belong to the country. We share it with you,” she explained that she was a Gambian-born daughter of Senegalese parents who migrated to The Gambia (end of story).

Another border-crossing incident: A Senegalese man between the ages of 29-33 came to the Karang border. He stood watching the police as people showed him their IDs. The police caught his guile.

Police: “Where is yours?” The police lightly waved a Gambian ID card he has finished checking towards the Senegalese man.

Senegalese man: “This is my first travel to *Gambie*. I went to visit my sister. She was afraid that I would lose my documents in Banjul. She took them from me for safekeeping until when I am returning home. But when I got up this morning to return to Senegal, she could not find the bunch of papers she took from me. She misplaced them in the house. That bunch has the receipt for my *carte d'identité*. I applied for one in Dakar.”

Police: “You said your sister lost your papers. How will you get another receipt to collect your *dentity* when it is ready?”

Senegalese man: “I have an Uncle who works with the *Maire* (mayor’s office) in Dakar, he will *legenty* (work out) another receipt for me.”

People present burst into laughter. (*Legenty* in this context means a corrupt maneuvering by the uncle to get him another receipt).

Police: “A big man like you is not ashamed of creating stories here. Go away.”

The man scurried away, thankful of his easy escape from the annoyed police officer (end of story).

It is a few minutes past 6.00pm. The border traffic was lean. A Senegalese man was redirected by one of the police officers to come to the police post to present his ID.

Man: “I live in Samba Nosso (a Senegalese village about six kilometers from the border). We crossed earlier to go to Fass (a Gambian village about three kilometers from the border), just Fass,” he repeated.

Police: “So if you went to Fass, you need not show us your ID?”

Man: “It is not like that.” Then he laughed and said, “forgive me this time.”

Police: (hesitantly) “You may go.” And the man left (end of story).

The Senegalese police inspected the ID card of a Gambian Sarahulli man travelling with his wife. The man explained in Mandinka that his wife had no ID. The police returned his ID to him and said in Wollof:

Police: “Say what you want to say in Wollof.” But the Sarahulli man repeated his narration in Mandinka. Infuriated, the police shouted,

Police: “You either speak Wollof or move out of this place.”

Sarahulli man: “I am from *Bollongkonoo* (upper river region of The Gambia.). If you want to force me to speak Wollof, you will cause disaster. I don’t know how to speak that language.”

The police turned his face away from the man, who jumped on the opportunity to escape with his wife. As the retreating figures of the couple receded towards the border, the infuriated police soliloquised:

Police: “They are like that...” he heaved, “...They want to force people to speak their language, but they never speak other people’s language.” (end of story).

The final story: A Gambian woman, aged about 36, arrived at the Karang border. She is married to a Senegalese and lives in Mbour (a Senegalese city located about 80 kilometers south of Dakar). The police asked her to show an ID. She explained that she is Gambian, but forgot to bring along her ID.

Police 1: “Ok, if you are a Gambian, go to them (Gambian Immigration across the other side of the border) and get a *laissez passer* in order for you to pass. When a Senegalese does not have a *dentité*, they send him or her to us to get a *laissez-passer*. Why can’t they do the same? Are they better than us?”

The police officer was apparently moody. Meanwhile, the woman called someone from her cellphone to see if they could bring her ID for her (apparently she was among a first party of a group travelling from The Gambia to Senegal). A second police officer at the scene opined to his colleague that:

Police 2: “She does not look Gambian, she looks Guinean. Perhaps she is *Sousou* or *Peul*.”

The woman hung-up the phone and immediately protested to the police:

Gambian Woman: “I am Gambian *cent percent* (100 percent).” She turned back to go to Gambian Immigration.

Some minutes later, she returned with a *laissez-passer* for the Senegalese police. And as the police officer inspected the paper, she re-launched her protest.

Gambian Woman: “My husband is Senegalese like you.”

Police 1: “Then tell you husband to find you Senegalese papers,” the police officer replied, as he returned the *laissez-passer* to her.

Gambian Woman: “Never!” the woman retorted. “I am Gambian. The Gambian papers are enough for me.”

The police silently watched her turn her back to him, as she walked away towards the open makeshift garage where intermediate transporters park their transports in Karang.

Each of these border-crossing stories leaves us with their own lessons. However, there is a central lesson in each of the stories which relays that Senegambians across both sides of the border share a sense of cross-border relatedness. Irrespective of the nuances in state-society relations, as state border agents conduct border administration, they can decide to prioritise social concerns above the state’s requirements. In fact, during my fieldwork, Senegalese border police defined The Gambia-Senegal border as a “community border.” Their community border concept has nothing to do with ECOWAS’ description of borders between member states. Instead, it is a metaphor that alludes to the deep social and cultural ties between Gambians and Senegalese. This is why in their border administration procedures they use their discretion to redefine the border’s role as a “selective filter.”¹²⁴ Some of the stories showed how border administration roles were downplayed for other considerations. Yet, some of

¹²⁴ David Newman and Anssi Passi, “Fences and Neighbours in Postmodern World: Boundary Narratives in Political Geography.” *Progress in Human Geography*, (1998): 186-207.

the stories also saw the rules being fully enforced by state border agents. Border agents' decision to grant excused passage to some of the crossers who did not have the required documentation was motivated by certain social values. For example, the rapid ease with which the police excused the women and the girls to cross the border without the required documentation was rooted in *yeremenda* (empathy). *Yeremenda* has both a moral and a social recourse and it guides social exchange and interactions in Senegambia. It ensures privileged treatment to people who face one form of inhibition or another, as a result of social status, income, age, gender, disability and other forms of restrictions. Its central tenet derives from cultural perceptions about relatedness.

It is therefore perceivable that the different border crossing stories manifested different notions of kinship and relatedness. For example, the young girls dipped into Senegambian joking relations to pave their passage. Kinship ties and age were useful tools for the women. The man from Samba Noso mediated his own wrong by employing *baluu* (a Wollof term which means to seek forgiveness). From these stories, border administration is a flexible process and border police are complicit in undermining the border, albeit inadvertently.

The exchanges between the police and the border crossers simultaneously exude references of sameness and differences. One of the five Gambian girls who told the police "We are going nowhere, just stopping in Karang to get our clothes from the tailor" trivialised the border's functions as a tool for excluding people or goods from given spaces. In reality, the girls were going somewhere: they crossed two different territorial and political jurisdictions - Amdallai (in The Gambia), to Karang (in Senegal). This instrumental use of proximity resonates with Geschiere's observation that in Africa "...often proximity seems to create kinship and thus becomes expressed in kinship terms."¹²⁵ Trivialising space is one way of invoking cross-border bonds to redefine the sense of separate political territories to

¹²⁵Peter Geschiere, *Witchcraft, Intimacy, and Trust, Africa in Comparison* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), XVI.

suit broad notions that Gambians and Senegalese are inter-related. Therefore, in the minds of the girls, the short distance between Amdallai and Karang is in fact a political “fiction” that is socially irrelevant.

The apparent unequal treatment of border crossers also highlights the dilemma in considering the border on its political merits and denouncing it based on social values. Consequently, in exercising their personal prejudice, the border administrators revealed the bifurcated characteristics of the state. Thus, they depicted Mamdani’s view that under the bifurcated African state, power is exercised differently and rules are applied in a variety of ways on citizens, (though technically, this case concerns citizens and non-citizens of the Senegalese state.)¹²⁶ This non-uniform application of rules resonates with Bayart’s concept that the African state is a rhizome state and as such political behaviour within the state is embedded in social relations.¹²⁷ Hence, the mixed responses the police manifested towards the different border crossers are part of what Bayart considers as normal political behaviour in which the “big man” and the “little man”’s actions come from the same motivations given the political context of their realities. Like Mamdani’s bifurcated state, Bayart’s rhizome state deviates from classical understandings of the state as a superior entity of power and authority in society.

In contrast to Bayart, Pierre Englebert views that post-colonial African states, “are not the endogenous creations of local history. They are not embedded in domestic power relations,” and consequently the “imported” origins of many African states...created structures that conflict with pre-existing political institutions, underlying norms of political behavior, and customary sources of political authority.”¹²⁸ For Englebert, the state has an inside and outside quality to it. It is influenced by at least two systems of

¹²⁶ Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizens and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (London: James Currey, 1996).

¹²⁷ Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London and New York: Longman, 1993).

¹²⁸ Pierre Englebert, *State Legitimacy And Development In Africa* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 5.

institutional frameworks (endogenous and exogenous ones). To survive, it has to implant itself in domestic power relations, which usually have endogenous roots. In that sense, Englebert's concept of the state shares some similarities with Bayart's concept of the state since in both cases the state sources its power from local processes.

However, Englebert's argument helps us to understand why state border agents display both the culture of the state, the Wesphalian origin of which created interstate borders, and the culture of the people. The mixing of these two institutional systems causes both conflict and harmony in cross-border and interstate relations. Consequently, the different reactions the police demonstrated in these border-crossing encounters denote a practice of using "a case by case" decision-making and approval process to enforce or relax border administration rules and regulations based on various dictates about social relations in Senegambia.

The border crossing exchanges can also be used to draw from Gramsci's concept of how the integral state works as an entity that consists of state forces and civil society that reinforce and contest each other's hegemony in society.¹²⁹ The inadvertent state-society complicity against the border re-echoes how these two entities "co-extend" to link political power and civil society within the state. But this complicity is rooted in tension and adversarial attitudes and as such the state and civil society are both allies and opponents within society.

The different attitudes highlighted in the border crossing stories both validate and invalidate cross-border kinship discourses. The confrontational exchange between the Gambian woman and the Senegalese police appeared to be interpersonal. However, the words they threw at each other bore the footprints of interstate disputes. When Gambian woman retorted to the police that, "I am Gambian *cent percent* (100 percent). "The Gambian papers are enough for me," she echoed her pride in her identity with a subtle rejection of Senegalese stereotypes about Gambians. But when we

¹²⁹Antonio Gramsci, *The Concept of 'Hegemony,'* (Kindle edition: Publishing International Relations Series, 2014).

compare her words with the police' statements that, "When a Senegalese does not have a *dentité*, they send him or her to us to get a *laissez-passer*. Why can't they do the same? Are they better than us?" we can compare how their words mimic competitive kinship models and interstate rivalry.

The verbal exchange communicates a sense of separateness, which stood out when the Gambian woman added, "My husband is Senegalese like you." Her words drew a border between her and her husband, and the police. When the police responded that, "Then tell your husband to find you Senegalese papers," he reinforced that personal border. His words also implied preference for the Senegalese-issued documents over Gambian ones, which is understandable, even if they had a hint of prejudice. The police's resentment against his cross-border Gambian colleagues further adds to the complexity of relations.

The border crossing vignettes highlight appreciable tensions in even intrastate relations, which is implicit in the Sarahuli man's assertion that, "I am from *Bollongkonoo* (upper river region of The Gambia.). If you want to force me to speak that language, you will cause disaster. I don't know how to speak that language." His statements introduced nuanced tensions around language and rural-urban distinctions in The Gambia. The police's query that "they" (not sure whether he meant Gambians in general or just the Sarahuli man and his wife) resist speaking other people's languages, but want other people to speak theirs, shows language creates barriers. The Sarahuli man's words also revealed tensions about gender, too. These encounters reveal a *mélange* of attitudes towards the border and towards social and interstate relations.

Different attitudes towards language can lead to different outcomes. However, it will be misleading to think that the implicit antagonism in the police officer's remarks about his cross-border counterparts defines relations between the two sets of police. It turned out during my fieldwork that the two sets of police were also intimate accomplices who subverted the laws of their respective states in a show of solidarity to each other. As we will see in

subsequent chapters, state-society relations are as complex as interstate relations. They keep evolving like people's understanding and use of the border.

The erratic application of notions of sameness and difference in cross-border exchange reinforces Dickson Eyoh's observation that the colonial project has disrupted African social and political organisation. Hence, the postcolonial situation gives all Africans the latitude "...to engage (re) inventions and manipulations of cultural identities for economic and political reasons."¹³⁰ Kinship, pride of place, country and language do simultaneously reinforce and contest one another in social and political relations as people explore what works for them in different contexts.

The conflicted encounters at the border prevail within a social environment that promotes *mbokh* or *mbadingya* or communal cross-border lifestyles (see chapters 6 & 7).¹³¹ This means social claims compete with political ones in Senegambia. Cross-border claims to community predate the "...stronger institutions and stronger "in-group" feelings necessary for cohesiveness of states."¹³² Depending on how one defines state cohesiveness, Senegambian social systems can redefine political leanings in society. Senegambian oral traditions - stories, fables, creation myths, proverbs, songs and poetry and other cultural and religious symbols existed before the state. These perpetuate a sense of an "imagined community," for a culture that is not dependent on print capitalism.¹³³ This is why Senegambian values and virtues "provided stability, continuity, and change in Senegambian societies for many centuries."¹³⁴ Thus, cross-border social communication fuses history, culture and religion to construct enduring ideas

¹³⁰Dickson Eyoh, "Community, Citizenship, and the Politics of Ethnicity in Post-Colonial Africa," in *Sacred Spaces and Public Quarries*, ed. Ezekiel Kalipeni and Paul T. Zelezná (Trenton, Asmara: Africa World Press, 1999), 272.

¹³¹*Mbokh* (Wolof term) and *mbadingho* (Mandinka term) both mean kinsman/ kinsmen in English.

¹³² Boaz Atzili, *Good Fences, Bad Neighbors, Border Fixity and International Conflict* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 1- 2.

¹³³ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

¹³⁴ Abdoulaye Saine, *Cultures and Customs of Gambia* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2012), 59.

of oneness.¹³⁵ However, society's socio-religious and economic life is connected to the political.¹³⁶ The state and society co-extend into each other, leaving an untidy separation between the two spheres (see chapters 4, 5, 6, & 7). This implies Senegambian concepts of community can evolve depending on the goals individuals seek to achieve in their social, economic and political relations. This is why transporters can ignore community in favour of their economic ambitions (see chapters 3, 4 & 5).

Shils defines community as a group of concrete and particular persons who acquire their significance by embodying common values that transcend their individuality, and are the source of their dignity.¹³⁷ This means ideas of community come from psychosocial attachments. Not every Gambian has blood relatives in Senegal, and vice versa, but the power of psychosocial attachments enabled society to reinvent and recreate a sense of enduring cross-border ties. Cultural and socio-religious forces - "norm entrepreneurs", initiate the processes that foster feelings of a cross-border community. These norm entrepreneurs attract other actors to their values. More and more people adopt those values, which reach a "tipping point," before cascading within society to become common social values or prescriptions.¹³⁸

The process through which community is built is relevant to theories about how state formation is related to conflict. Herbst, Bates and Tilly argue that external conflicts are essential for state-building, creating good institutions and accountable state processes (the "bellicist theory"). But The Gambia-Senegal interstate conflicts have had no positive effects on their

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 59.

¹³⁶ This mirrors Zellers idea that the borders are connected to the center see Zeller, "What Makes Borderlands Real..."

¹³⁷ Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society, Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 6.

¹³⁸ For the spreading of cultural and international ideas see Finnermore and Sikkink quoted in John Williams, *The Ethics of Territorial Borders, Drawing Lines in the Shifting Sand* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 43.

statehood, as both states are not well-built states.¹³⁹ As such, the state is not autonomous from social systems.

Senegambian social systems consist of tacit mechanisms that undermine state autonomy. Autonomy is used here to mean the state's ability to independently create its structures and policies without any social interference.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, it means the state's exclusive right to make and unmake policies that mediate and balance different interest groups to entrench state power and authority in society.¹⁴¹ Ghai defines autonomy as a quest of a group within the state, but this is not how the word is being used here.¹⁴²

However, if we consider historical happenings like the collapse of the Senegambia confederation, we can argue that the ability of Senegambian social systems to effectively undermine the state is debatable. The collapse of the Senegambia Confederation suggests that Senegambians never fully reclaimed their unity, irrespective of the enduring discourse about sameness.¹⁴³ Political attempts to unify Senegambia failed. However, arguably, there is a genuine sense of community that transcends space. Formal state institutions exist but cross-border bonds emptied them of their substances. But amidst this reality, the state's bordering processes also constraints social bonds. Therefore, state-society relations like the one-ness discourse, are complex and multidimensional. Wolfgang Zeller's study of the Namibia-Zambia and Uganda-South Sudan borders suggests the same

¹³⁹See Jeffrey Herbst, *States And Power In Africa, Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, Ad 990-1992* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992); Robert H. Bates, *When Things Fell Apart, State Failure in Late-Century Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹⁴⁰See Tom De Herdt and Jean-Pierre De Sardan, ed., *Real Governance and Practical Norms in Sub-Saharan Africa, The Game of the Rules* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

¹⁴²See Tom De Herdt and Jean-Pierre De Sardan, ed., *Real Governance and Practical Norms in Sub-Saharan Africa, The Game of the Rules* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

¹⁴³Jeggan C. Senghor, *The Politics of The Senegambian Integration 1958-1994* (Bern: Peter Lang AG., International Academic Publishers, 2008).

complexity in the relationship between borderland people and state authorities.¹⁴⁴

We can use concepts of how social relations work to argue that the inherent contradictions in Senegambian one-ness discourses come from the dynamics that govern social interactions in society. According to Castoriadis, Marxism and Revolutionary Theory believe social change cause radical discontinuities in society and these disruptions can interfere with the nature of social relations.¹⁴⁵ This implies the contradictions in Senegambia's one-ness discourse comes from the natural processes of social change, which causes discontinuities in society. Migdal also argues that societies thrive with multiple systems of rules (competing sets of rules) that invite negotiation, interaction and resistance. Groups in society promote multiple sets of "formal and informal guideposts for how to behave."¹⁴⁶ This means some practices may be abandoned for new ones. As "there is no uncontested universal code – in law, religion, or any other institution, in any society for guiding people's lives."¹⁴⁷ Through "subtle and not-so-subtle rewards and sanctions," "loose-knit informal collections of people as well as highly structured organizations with manifold resources at their disposal," are formed. This implies social battles about how people should behave are constant. "The nature and outcomes of these struggles give societies their distinctive structure and character."¹⁴⁸ Thus, Senegambian social systems continuously evolve and their growth is marked by inherent contradictions, which nonetheless can maintain the essence of discourses about Senegambian one-ness.

We will explore, in the next section, how the creation of the border settlements of Amdallai, Karang, Farrafenni and Keur Ayib, respectively, are examples of how social stabilities and ruptures led people from both sides of

¹⁴⁴ Wolfgang Zeller, "What Makes Borderlands Real- In the Namibia-Zambia and Uganda-South Sudan Borderlands," (Phd diss., University of Helsinki, 2015).

¹⁴⁵ Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998).

¹⁴⁶ Shils quoted in Migdal, *State in Society*,...2001, 6.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 11-15.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 11-15.

the border to cooperate in building border settlements and new spaces for social exchange.

2.4. Border Settlement Creation at The Gambia-Senegal Border

2.4.1. Amdallai

Separated from Karang by an invisible borderline upon which sit rows of canteens, stalls and hawkers, the Gambian border village of Amdallai, Lower Nuimi District, North Bank Region, is located 23 kilometers from the Gambian capital, Banjul. Save for the sign board which reads “Welcome to Amdallai” and the different state symbols on site, there is no other way of differentiating it from Karang, which borders it. According to oral sources, Amdallai derived its name from migrants fleeing French colonial rule in Senegal. After they crossed into British territory, they thanked God for their escape with the worshipful exclamation, “*Alhamdulillah*,” (praise be to God). This Arabic word was corrupted to “Amdallai,” the place name for the settlement. The north bank trunk road connects Amdallai to Banjul through Barra, a wharf town and terminal point for the Banjul-Barra ferries servicing north-south river crossings. The Gambia Department of Immigration, The Gambia Police Force, the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and the National Drugs Enforcement Agency (NDEA), all have offices in Amdallai. In 2008, the population of the village was estimated at 1, 245 people.



Figure 2: Where the children and the bicycle are located is almost the borderline and all territory in front of it is in Senegal. Source: <http://www.globalwheeling.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Gambian-Border-crossing-Karang1.jpg>, accessed December 29, 2013.

2.4.2. Karang

Karang is located about 72 kilometers from Kaolack and 165 kilometers from the Senegalese capital Dakar. It falls under the *department de Foundiougne*, Fatick and, *delta de Saloum* region of Senegal.¹⁴⁹ Historically, Karang was known as *Kamanda wuloo* (the Kamanda forest in Mandinka). The place was traditionally owned by the people of four associated islands – Ginack, located in the north bank of The Gambia River. Two of the Islands are in The Gambia, and the other two in Senegal.

Karang was once a farmland site for the Senegambian marabout Sheikh Mass Kah, a relative of Serign Bamba Touba, founder of Senegal's Mouride brotherhood. Kah fled his native Senegal due to repressive French rule. He first settled at the border - in Karangbaa, "the original or bigger Karang." A dispute with colonial Senegalese border customs agents there

¹⁴⁹Kaolack is a major Senegalese border town and an important communication junction for cross-border and intrastate traffic in Senegal. The *delta de Saloume* consists of the Sine-Saloume region of Senegambia. Historically, the area stretched from Senegal into The Gambia.

led Kah to move to Karang.¹⁵⁰ But he later crossed the border into The Gambia, where he founded settlements along the border. He eventually died there.¹⁵¹

In 1952, Karang was a village of only six compounds. The village chief, Matarr Mboum, arrived there around the same time as the Islamic cleric Kah. Colonial Karang was part of the *arrondissement* de Touba Couta. But in 2008, Karang became an independent commune. In 2009, it elected its first mayor Ousmane Sene, son of a retired Gambian Police Officer, who settled in Karang.¹⁵²

Before 2002, the Senegalese border Police and the *Douanes* (Senegalese Customs) offices were located at the centre of Karang, about 2 kilometers from the border. But in 2002, in line with President Abdoulaye Wade's policies to redefine cross-border exchange with The Gambia, the Offices relocated closer to the border with Amdallai. From this new site, border agents could better control border flows and monitor evaders of border control.

Karang's police office comprised regular border police, plain clothes and intelligence personnel. The Customs office includes undercover economic intelligence personnel used for spying across the border. A Senegalese Gendarme camp stands close to the border at Touba Couta, a community with a nature reserve park for tourists. Karang is also known as Poste Karang, a reference to the border control offices located there.¹⁵³ In 2013, its population was about 13,000 people.

Situated on north Gambia and northwest Senegal, the Amdallai-Karang border directly links Banjul and Dakar through Kaolack -a Senegalese town-, *Route Nationale* No.5, the north bank trunk road and the Banjul-Barra ferry crossing. The Amdallai-Karang border is a popular border crossing point in Senegambia. There are villages on both sides of the border. But there are no visible buffer zones that separate most of these

¹⁵⁰Interview with Dembo Mane, Karang, Senegal, 18th January, 2013.

¹⁵¹The place name for Karang derived from Karangba.

¹⁵²Interview with Ousmane Sene, mayor of Karang, 21st January, 2013.

¹⁵³Interview with Dembo Mane, Karang, Senegal, 18th January, 2013.

border communities. Normally, the travel time from Banjul to Dakar is six hours. People can use private, commercial and public transportation for this journey.

The Amdallai-Karang border has been a major route for the re-export trade, which enabled The Gambia to be a “coastal warehouse state” which fed off frontier economic disparities with its neighbours, especially Senegal.¹⁵⁴ Today, the Amdallai-Karang border’s role as the conduit of trade has diminished, validating claims that cross-border trade is prone to various shifts.¹⁵⁵ However, it is still an important transit point for a considerable volume of trade (see chapter 6).

Since 2000, Senegalese transporters have used Karang to stage border protests against Gambian authorities. Border protests, political hooliganism and the vandalism of public property have become new narratives in Amdallai-Karang border experiences.

2.4.3. Farrafenni

Farrafenni is located in the North Bank Region of The Gambia, along the Bamba Tenda-YelliTenda ferry crossing. The Trans-Gambia Highway, which runs across the centre of The Gambia, cuts through it and connects it to Jarra Soma, another important Gambian commercial town in the Lower River Region. Farrafenni is strategically located. It is an important regional commercial hub and communication junction for cross-border and sub-regional exchange. Hence, it’s more popular than the North Bank’s regional capital Kerewan. Senegal’s *Route Nationale* No. 4 links Kaolack, Niorro and Keur Ayib and connects to the Trans-Gambia Highway at Farrafenni. These road connections go further down to Bignona and Ziguinchor (Casamance) through The Gambia.

¹⁵⁴Daniel Bach, “The revival of regional integration in Africa” (Working papers, Documentos de Trabalho no. 56, CESA, Lisboa, 1999), 5, accessed March 18, 2015, http://pascal.iseg.utl.pt/~cesa/files/Doc_trabalho/56.PDF.

¹⁵⁵Kirk. S. Bowman, “The U.S- Mexican Border as Locator of Innovation and Vice,” in *Borders and Border Politics In A Globalizing World*, ed. Paul, Ganster and David E. Lorey, (Lanham: SR Books, 2005), 269 –284.

Farrafenni (the tail of the rice fields) derived from two Mandinka terms *Farolu* (the rice fields) and *fenyo* (tail). The settlement's name came from a re-naming of an earlier settlement named Chaku Bantang, which was founded by a legendary Mandinka man Walimang Dibba. Chaku Bantang was located about two kilometers away from the rice fields of the Mandinka women on the south bank of The Gambia River.¹⁵⁶ The name is a combination of the Dibba protonym (praise name) Chaku Dibba and the large *Bantang* (silk cotton) tree that stood in the vicinity of the original settlement.

Before 1952, Farrafenni was insignificant. It had no shops; no groundnut purchasing *secor* and was hardly listed on the map of The Gambia. Its people only farmed and sold their groundnuts and shopped at Ballinghor, the nearest wharf town located 3.5 kilometers away.¹⁵⁷ But the construction of the north bank trunk road, which transected the Trans-Gambia Highway at Farrafenni, changed the destiny of the settlement.¹⁵⁸ It attracted trade as river transport declined and wharf towns in The Gambia collapsed. From the ashes of Ballinghor, Farrafenni rose. Ballinghor's traders and shops relocated there. The settlement became a convenient market town for traders from Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Mali and Mauritania.¹⁵⁹ The name Farrafenni replaced Chaku Bantang and was featured in the late colonial and post-colonial maps of The Gambia.

Today, Farrafenni's population is about 30,000 people. It has a *lumo* (weekly market) and an Anglican Mission secondary technical school. This school was for many years, the most highly sought after secondary school in North Bank and Central River Regions of The Gambia. The town also has telephone networks, clinics, a bank, a major military barracks of The Gambia

¹⁵⁶ Email interview with Baba G. Jallow, Farrafenni native, Boston, USA, 18th March, 2014.

¹⁵⁷ *Secor* is the local name for groundnut buying sites in The Gambia. See Jay Saidy, "The Louma is for everybody from everywhere," *The Gambia News Bulletin*, (n/a), 1979.

¹⁵⁸ See Donald R. Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa: The History of Globalization in Nuimi, The Gambia* (New York: M. E. Sharp, Inc., 2010). Wright noted how the colonial regime and its mercantile partners used credit facilities to lure indigenous Gambians from producing subsistent food groups in favour of groundnuts.

¹⁵⁹ Saidy, "The Louma,"... 1979.

National Army, a major referral hospital constructed by the Jammeh regime and a mini stadium. In the past, it also hosted a National Trading Corporation (NTC) wholesale depot. The Gambia Immigration Department, the Gambia National Police, the National Intelligence Agency and Drug Control Enforcement Agency all have their divisional headquarters in the town. In 1995, armed rebels who wanted to overthrow the Yahya Jammeh government attacked the Farrafenni barracks. However, they were repelled. Farrafenni links with Keur Ayib, a neighbouring Senegalese border village.

2.4.4. Keur Ayib

Goorgi Ayib Gueye, a Gambian Islamic scholar founded Keur Ayib after he returned from his cleric's sojourn in pursuit of Islamic education (see chapter 7). The place name is from *Keur* (home, in Wollof) and Ayib, the founder's name. It means "home of Ayib, or "Ayib's settlement" or "Ayib's community." The word *Goorgi* is an honorific term used before the names of respectable male personalities in Wollof society.¹⁶⁰ Ayib mobilised labour from relatives and well-wishers to clear the thick bushy land inhabited by hyenas and other species of wild animals, which became his settlement. After constructing residential structures there, relatives and other people moved in with him to scare away the wild animals. He established an Islamic school in the community, and taught students the Quran. Ayib's community survived through farming.¹⁶¹

Across the border from Keur Ayib is Keur Aly, a Gambian border village founded by Ayib's father, and the original home of Ayib. The two villages are considered "twin" villages and their communities have strong kinship bonds. Both communities bury their dead in one cemetery and worship in the same mosque in The Gambia.

Keur Aly is the immediate Gambian border village to Senegal (Keur Ayib), but Farrafenni is considered the border "post," due to its commercial importance in cross-border exchange. The village of Medina Sabakh, also

¹⁶⁰Interview with Sait Gueye, village chief and son of Ayib, Keur Ayib, Senegal, 13th February, 2013.

¹⁶¹*Ibid.*

founded by Gambian families who moved across the border into Senegal, is located about 2 kilometers from Keur Ayib. It was an important administrative post for the French colonial government. Both Keur Ayib and Medina Sabakh benefit and survive from the border. The border enforcement agents are located in Keur Ayib, whereas the regional administrative office is located in Medina Sabakh.

Keur Ayib was opened up by a road network that was initially planned to pass through Medina Sabakh, but was re-routed to the village after Medina Sabakh protested about the initial plan.¹⁶² Keur Ayib became connected to major urban and cross-border economic centres and became an important thoroughfare for cross-border communication and exchange, ending its isolation.

From Farrafenni, going into Keur Ayib, a Senegalese *Gendarmerie* camp is noticeable. Its wall/fence stands almost neck-to-neck to the barrage that separates the two countries. To the left, a small mosque stands in-between the *Gendarmerie* and the *Douanes* offices. The *Gendarme* camp also serves as the residences for staff from both offices. The *Chef de Bureau* of the Customs lives in a well-guarded and restricted residence next to the Customs Office. The Senegalese Border Police post is located about 0.5 kilometer away, to the right when facing the border. The Senegalese Border Forestry Office is also located a short distance away from the police station. It is the first Senegalese government agency one encounters on the way to exiting the border. Keur Ayib's population was about 1153 in 2015.¹⁶³

Keur Ayib, Farrafenni, Karang and Amdallai were all founded by families who sought to isolate themselves from the colonial administration. These "self-contained" sites of refuge were symbols of indigenous resistance to colonial domination. In the next section, we will discuss how

¹⁶²*Ibid.*

¹⁶³This figure was informally obtained from a staff of the Senegalese Ministry of Finance in 2015.

irrespective of the *dome-ndeye* solidarity highlighted in the deep politics of these communities, the border has also been a source of *dome-baaye* sentiments in The Gambia-Senegal interstate relations.

2.5. The Border and Interstate Dynamics

The border has been a resource for both indigenous people and for the state. The border community building projects made use of cultural resources such as kinship. Through various support systems, the founders' of these communities relied on their social networks to achieve their settlement creation ambitions. Inter-ethnic mixing was also facilitated as new settlements opened up to other people from other ethnic groups. This reinforced Senegambia's tradition for mixed settlements. These communities adopted a common body of rules, which blurred ethnic identities. They also promoted common values and a shared culture, and thus created cohesive communities. Local people also used the border to distance themselves from colonial rule and oppression. The border offered quick exit and flight, to escape political threats from the opposite side of the border. But the colonial government also formulated strategies to exploit the political economy of the border.¹⁶⁴ The road networks it built around the border and administrative agencies established in the border communities were intended to enforce the colonial agenda for taxation, wealth extraction and economic competition in Senegambia. These colonial legacy gave birth to the postcolonial policies that restrict the cross-border mobility of certain goods and even humans.

Colonial road networks facilitated mobility, contact and economic competition within and between The Gambia and Senegal. So colonial policy entrenched *dome-ndeye* ideas across the borders. But it also promoted *dome-baaye* sentiments through the economic rivalry that defined British and French economic policies in Senegambia. The way local people used the border to create settlements and new economic opportunities for

¹⁶⁴ See Patrick Chabal, *Political Domination in Africa*, Reflections on the limits of power (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

themselves and the way the colonial government used the border to gain economic benefits from it connected the “deep politics of society” and the “high politics of state” in colonial Senegambia.¹⁶⁵ These connections endured and are part of postcolonial border dynamics in Senegambia.

The developments at the border also implied tensions in state-society relations. The conflicts between the indigenous people and the colonial administration resulted in the creation of some of the border settlements and also new border administrative outposts. Medina Sabakh resisted French plans to build a road through its community. But Keur Ayib became the new location for the road, which made it an economically viable community. These border dynamics highlight how communities, like the state, creatively use the resources at their disposal to tackle their constraints. It also shows that conflicts can have productive outcomes, if not for all, but for some people. These colonial border dynamics would shape The Gambia-Senegal postcolonial relations over the border. They also shaped the nature of cross-border ties and the kinship and religious links between the two countries. Since religious ambition has significantly contributed to border settlement creation, the next section explores how religious and kinship values interconnect to shape Senegambian kinship discourses and interstate relations over the border.

2.6: Religion and Cross-Border Solidarity

Religion brought new values to The Gambia-Senegal border through the creation of Amdallai, Karang, and Keur Ayib settlements, which were premised on logics of a model cross-border community.¹⁶⁶ These religious settlements were embedded in cross-border social and religious life and easily drew membership from both sides of the border. Religious infrastructure such as Quranic schools and mosques were provided in the

¹⁶⁵John Lonsdale, “Political accountability in African history,” in *Political Domination in Africa*, edited by Patrick Chabal, 126- 157 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

¹⁶⁶This resonates with the creation of Muslim self-contained communities in pre-colonial western Sudan based on political privileges or conquest. See Charlotte A. Quinn, “A Nineteenth Century Fulbe State,” *The Journal of African History* 12 (1971).

community to support spirituality.¹⁶⁷ The border was therefore shaped by religion.

The border too has had a formative effect on cross-border religious attachments. Generally, most Gambians and Senegalese are Muslims or Christians. But they could belong to different sects and denominations that have different spiritual practices. Senegalese are more embedded in religious brotherhoods. They display their religious attachments as part of their everyday practices. They can swear in the name of their spiritual guides, or praise them in their everyday conversations, or use their images and posters in homes, offices, markets, streets, and so on. In contrast, Gambians are less integrated into religious brotherhoods, except for groups like the Nema Nasiru community. However, there are Sufi communities in both countries. But they are more predominant in Senegal than in The Gambia or in other neighbouring countries.¹⁶⁸ However, the differences in the way Gambians and Senegalese manifest their religious attachments to brotherhoods does not undermine cross-border religious and interfaith solidarity (see chapter 7).

Predominantly Muslim Senegal elected a Christian, the late Leopold Sedar Senghor, as president at independence and he ruled the country for about two decades. This religious tolerance also features in Gambian political life. Sir Dawda K. Jawara, who ruled the country for about thirty years as president converted to Christianity but later returned to Islam. This

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*; Charlotte A. Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia* (London: Longman/Prentice Hall Press, 1972); Florence Mahoney, *Stories of Senegambia* (Fajara: Government Printers, 1981); Abdoulaye Bathily, "La Traite Atlantique des Esclaves et ses Effets Économiques et Sociaux en Afrique: La Cas duGalam, Royaume de l'Hinterland Sénagambien au Dix-Huitième Siècle," *The Journal of African History* 27 (1986); Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Andrew F. Clark, *From Frontier to Backwater, Economy and society in the Upper Senegal Valley (West Africa), 1850- 1920* (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1999); Donald Wright, *The World and a very Small place in Africa* (Armonk, London: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2004).

¹⁶⁸ L. A. Villalon, "Charisma and Ethnicity in Political Context: A Case Study in the Establishment of a Senegalese Religious Clientele," *Journal of International Africa Institute*, Vol.63, No.1 (1993): 80- 101.

was never an obstacle to his political career in predominantly Muslim Gambia. President Jawara was deposed in a military coup in 1994.¹⁶⁹

Islamic and Christian religious holidays are officially recognised and celebrated in both The Gambia and Senegal. During these occasions, Muslim and Christian religious leaders “exchange messages of goodwill punctuated by statements of mutual respect and recognition of their respective prophets and faiths. Religious leaders of both faiths also stress the need to maintain religious harmony” for social peace.¹⁷⁰ Believers of non-monotheist religions also share these values with the rest of Senegambia.

Cross-border social and inter-religious solidarities are offshoots of Senegambian ‘theories’ about spirituality. Briefly, these theories center on a belief in the existence of a supreme God who sanctified human relations. God rewards individuals for strengthening ties and He punishes them for severing and desecrating family bonds. He also rewards good and punishes evil, which is part of a belief in an afterlife, and a judgement day. Senegambians also believe that God’s reward to individuals starts in the present life. God is a merciful God who listens and satisfies the needs of individuals who pray to Him. Prayer is a power link that connects man to God. It brings good fortune and controls supernatural forces that affect man (see chapter 7). These theories about spirituality shape social behaviour and practices among religious communities and inter-generational relations among different social groups in Senegambia.

The spiritual quest is to attain nearness to the divine and to have that, one must continuously journey on the Creator’s path. Historically, Senegambian men of piety who desire spiritual elevation and closeness to God embark on literal and metaphorical Journeys of Piety. These involve physical displacement to other places to study under reputed scholars of the time and to “discover” and learn through devotion, esoteric spiritual knowledge. Such an aspirant voluntarily gives up the comfort and familiarity

¹⁶⁹Dawda K. Jawara, *Kairaba* (Banjul/London: Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, 2009).

¹⁷⁰Saine, *Culture and Customs*, ...2012, 56.

of his home to seek God in the insecurity of the “wilderness.” He experiences hardship, loneliness, hunger, suffering and many kinds of tribulations that “un-toughens” the heart for it to accommodate God. These experiences help the individual to gain wisdom—the outcome of tough life experiences endured during these spiritual projects. They also cleanse the individual, ridding him off arrogance, bad manners, greed and all other behaviour that a pious heart cannot accommodate.¹⁷¹

Exile was a path to piety for people on religious projects. Thus, many of Senegambia’s fabled men of piety suffered displacement and exile - from Sheikh Amadou Bamba, to Bai Ibrahima Niass, to Sheikh Mass Kah and Ma Ansou Niang, to name a few. Bai Ibrahima Niass, Sheikh Mass Kah and Ma Ansou Niang had all lived some of their displacement and exile in The Gambia. The well-loved Gambian religious scholar Austas Omar Bun Jeng spent many years in Senegal before finally returning home to The Gambia. People embark on these journeys by personal choice, but the journeys have broad social outcomes that resulted from that person’s/ wayfarer’s interactions with people and communities he encountered while on this journey.

Senegambian culture and humanitarian values require that people show kindness and support to displaced persons or the wayfarer, or *toumarankee*, especially those seeking God. They should provide them with housing, food, hospitality, guidance and so on, as a matter of right. Helping a *toumarankee* is considered a devotional act that has a trickledown effect.¹⁷² Individuals who help strangers are divinely rewarded for their kindness and that reward extends to other family members like children. This implies the kindness a parent shows to the wayfarer guarantees that his or her children will never want or despair while in the “wilderness.” Helping strangers also signifies sharing the bounties of God, which is an important Islamic injunction.

¹⁷¹These are from family narratives about our forefathers who made journeys of piety from Fouta Toro to other areas of Senegambia, to enhance their spirituality.

¹⁷² The term refers to a displaced person or a wayfarer.

Senegambian culture expects the wayfarer to show *gorray* in return for people's generosity. *Gorray* is a reciprocal sentiment from someone who has benefitted from another person's benevolence. It is a combination of gratefulness, faithfulness and dignity.¹⁷³ *Gorray* leads to sentiments of *wullere* or *kullere*, the bases for enduring social relations. These terms (both used here to mean the same thing) refer to an inter-generational sense of gratitude and positive association that derives from long-standing ties and past positive encounters, experiences of mutual assistance and other kinds of social engagement that connect members of a community (see chapter 7). *Wullere* concerns both interpersonal and collective relations of the past based on host-guest, teacher-student, fellow traveller, companionship, or prayer service ties among individuals. Senegambia inter-ethnic joking traditions also derived from sentiments of *wullere* based on social contacts during displacement, exile, trade and other journeys or encounters of the past. It serves as the social infrastructure for ongoing and future relations among persons, between families or social groups. Individuals or groups connected through it are expected to protect it. It structures social solidarity and civic engagement in ways that are beyond the reach of the state.

Wullere/kullere structures social communication among Senegambia's *talibee* networks. They routinely invoke past generosity, solidarities and companionships among major religious figures to sanction their later offspring to honour, respect and be loyal to each other. It is a common practice among Senegambian religious groups to say "from the times of the *Maams*, or *Sunyo Maami*," which means from the time of our forefathers. In Senegambian social thought and communication, such an oral reference emphasises the historicity and authenticity of an act, or a relationship. *Wullere* can be used to invoke and retell relationships that originate in the past. Retelling long memories of social encounters cognitively conditions social behaviour and configures *longue durée* social, intellectual and symbolic capital in society.

¹⁷³I had a Skype conversation with a Senegalese friend C.D. Seck, on the links between *gorray* and *wullere* in Wolof culture, 22nd June, 2015.

Wullere reconstructs Senegambian heritage. Its function as heritage is beyond the commemorative status given to physical space. People respond to it cognitively. It is self-regulating and self-referential, and connects diverse individuals who understand and engage with the present through the past. They share values and meanings and a sense of belonging.¹⁷⁴ Heritage aids continuity in social relations and it can be reclaimed to sooth both social and political ruptures in society.

Wullere has similar symbolic meanings to *dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye*, since all three words derive from relations of the past. Together, these words embody the fabric metaphor, which is also a symbolic patchwork for cross-border ties. It is thus meaningful to understand *wullere* as heritage, which fosters continuities in social and economic relations beyond the limitations of territory. Like most Senegambian kinship metaphors, *wullere* can fill political gaps in interstate relations, too. It can harmonise social, economic and political objectives. It offers religious communities a protected space where religious leaders can prevail on political elites to safeguard interstate relations when it is threatened.

Islam and society have similar attitudes towards social bonds. Hence, Senegambian society did not find it difficult to be receptive to Islam.¹⁷⁵ Islam became a resource for pursuing the social agenda, contributing to institutional stability in society. As The Gambia-Senegal relations meander between phases of harmony and discord, Senegambian religious sites largely work as “peace-building” spaces for cross-border and interstate relations. Islam has been a mediator of peace, stimulator of order, harmony and friendship in cross-border, interstate and state-society relations in Senegambia. It provides an avenue for social actors to interact with political ones and reduces the barrier functions of the border (see chapter 7).

However, subject to changes in social and political processes, religious and kinship ideals may not be observed. They could be ignored or

¹⁷⁴ For a more spatial-based use of heritage, see Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁷⁵ See Philip D. Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa, Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), 195.

misused to breach social, economic and political relations and thus pose a danger to relations. In the next section, we explore how the state, like people, demonstrates creativity and contingency in the use of religious, kinship and other resources to foster its political agenda.

2.7: Learning from the Grassroots: The Gambia-Senegal Political Relations

Senegambian religious and kinship ideas have political uses. Politicians selectively use them in interstate relations. The presidents and ministers of The Gambia and Senegal routinely referred to each other as *dome-ndeye*, *natangho* or “brother” and “friend” even while communicating in English or French. The use of such egalitarian language reaffirms equality between the two countries, irrespective of size differences. Some observers, who frame these words within global political exchanges, may argue that they are “standards” for international political communication. Politicians are usually swayed by sentiments of international law and politics. Their public remarks are influenced by norms in international political communication, and “brother” and “friend” are a common reference in most bilateral gender-blind political speeches.

However, the words Gambian and Senegalese politicians use to talk about interstate relations are carefully chosen and are embedded in socio-religious attitudes. As such, the terms “brother” and “friend” have grassroots social significance. They embody traditional camaraderie language that celebrates relations among age-sets in village or community contexts, among leaders of neighbouring communities, or among people connected through different forms of lateral bonds. When used to denote interstate relations, they signify *mbokh* and *dome-ndeye* relatedness.

From the 1960s to the late 1980s, interstate communication and cooperation symbolically integrated the fabric metaphor, *wullere*, *dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye* ties.¹⁷⁶ Religious and kinship ideas like the

¹⁷⁶See Mariama Khan, “Indigenous Languages and Africa’s development dilemma,” *Journal of Development in Practice* (Dip), 24:5-6 (2014).

“friendship bonds” have been used to foster a shared “Senegambian identity,” and to promote the Senegambian “re-unification” agenda. The twinning of Banjul and Dakar in 1967 came out of these desires. The establishment of “friendship” bonds between individuals and between communities has been a longstanding practice in Senegambia. Based on ideas of friendship, Mandinkas, for instance, name two people who share a reliable amity as *banta kunsal* - twins beyond/outside the womb.¹⁷⁷ The description of this relationship, like the twinning project, mirrored society, forged stronger interpersonal or inter-community ties and where applicable, gave legitimacy to the integration agenda.

The two states initiated *Penchum Chosannie* Senegambia (The Cross-Roads of Senegambian Culture or Traditions), an annual cross-border and interstate celebration of Senegambian culture. A joint committee of the two states organised and funded indigenous arts and craft competitions, games such as wrestling, hair plaiting, poetry, music, group performances and *hala mbologan* (a traditional quiz). Politicians and ordinary citizens attended these events. By 1979, *Penchum Chossanie* Senegambia was officially celebrated for the fifth time since independence.¹⁷⁸ These celebrations were part of joint interstate cultural programmes, which included youth exchange visits between the two countries and the establishment of the Senegalo-Gambian Advisory Committee on Education, Culture, Youth and Sports.

The interstate cooperation on education led to the establishment of the Senegalese high and primary schools in The Gambia. The schools offered bilingual instruction in French and English, to both Gambians and Senegalese. A joint Senegalese-Gambian management committee managed these schools, which had two streams.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷“BCC delegation in Dakar,” *The Gambia Weekly*, June 9, 1989, 4.

¹⁷⁸“Various Dignitaries Witness Penchum Chossanie Senegambia,” *The Gambia News Bulletin* March 29, 1979.

¹⁷⁹“Senegalese institutes of learning to be set up,” *The Gambia News Bulletin*, January 11, 1979.

The political use of religious and kinship resources to further the state's agenda extended to the economy. The two countries collaborated in agriculture, economic planning, crop protection, forestry, animal health and production, posts and telecommunication, civil aviation, meteorology and public health. In posts and telecommunications, they negotiated the direct exchange of money orders. In health, they harmonised "health legislations, control of endemic diseases and social evils such as uncontrolled sale of drugs, alcoholism, "xessal" and improper use of narcotics." They also exchanged doctors and public health technicians and together reviewed the state of primary health care in both countries. They supervised contagious diseases and coordinated border vaccination campaigns. They had regular consultations on health matters.¹⁸⁰ In tourism, they collaborated and published a Senegalo-Gambia Bilingual Tourist Guide. By 1980, the two countries collaborated on the Dakar-Banjul-Bissau road project. They amicably re-demarcated their land boundary through a friendly reallocation of territory between them. The negotiations for all these initiatives were framed by *dome-ndeye* and *wullere* sentiments.

Interstate cooperation in these areas happened in a cross-border cultural and social environment where people conducted cross-border and cross-ethnic marriages, celebrated each other's joys, mourned each other's deaths, traded with each other, helped each other on the farms, shared farmlands and worshipped together, among other things (see chapters 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7). Integrating the political agenda with the social one was also facilitated by the cultural system: the two states share *wullere*, they constitute a fabric and they are *dome-ndeyes*.

However, there is another side to interstate relations. The two countries can be *dome-baayes* too, when state logics dictate that (see chapters 4 & 5). Policy statements on interstate relations were at times not honoured, due to reluctance and policy differences. For example, plans to construct a bridge across The Gambia River to "end the use of ferries," and

¹⁸⁰"Senegal and Gambia Consult on Health," *The Gambia News Bulletin*, July 26, 1980.

also to construct a barrage and dams to facilitate the development of agriculture in both countries under The Gambia River Basin Organisation (OMVG) never materialised, due to political reluctance and differences in policy goals.¹⁸¹ While serious interstate policy challenges failed to be settled, interstate cooperation in foreign affairs was promising. The erratic nature of interstate cooperation symbolises the longstanding mistrust and competition between the British and French in Senegambia. Former colonial rivalries influence the attitudes of the political elites; however, personal agendas as well as political ones have had defining influences on interstate relations. In that sense, politicians and ordinary citizens draw from the same script, and can be both cooperative and prone to conflict depending on what is at stake.

M'bai also observed that from 1969-1971, the relationship between the two countries was turbulent and since then, the relationship continued towards a distant path.¹⁸² Like the border, interstate relations were subject to shifts but reflect the social idiom that irrespective of how much the tongue and the teeth clash, they must learn to live in the same mouth (see chapter 1). The tongue and teeth metaphor excuses fighting, but they must make-up again. Making –it up again has been an enduring feature of interstate relations.

Some observers of The Gambia-Senegal relations praise the Jawara-Senghor era as the apex of cordial interstate relations. The two countries signed numerous treaties of friendship and cooperation during this time. They also conducted a friendly demarcation of the border with *dome-ndeye* and *wullere* style. The Jawara-Diouf era was utopian and was marked by Diouf's ambitious re-unification agenda. It led to the Senegambia Confederation, which eventually collapsed (see chapter 1). The Jammeh-Diouf period was marked by uncertainty in interstate relations. Diouf thought he could use his mature political experience to lure young Jammeh and his government to come back to his integration project, but Jammeh and his

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, 3.

¹⁸² Fafa Edrissa, M'bai, *A Senegambian Insight* (Surrey/Banjul: Fafa E.M. M'bai and Unwin Brothers Ltd., 1992), 1-6.

fellow young officers had no interest in “handing over” their country to Senegal. Interstate relations erratically shifted between periods of good and acrimonious relations. The Jammeh-Wade presidencies were also an uneasy time for bilateral ties. Interstate suspicion was high and at times the two countries engaged in verbal confrontations. The border between the two countries was closed several times during their rules (see chapter 3). President Macky Sall inherited the uneasy interstate relations Wade left behind. The Jammeh-Sall relation was the worst time for interstate relations as the two countries constantly fought over the border, which was at one time, closed by the Senegalese transport association, for almost five months (see chapter 4).

State logics and leadership have equally contributed to the escalation of The Gambia-Senegal political tensions over border. M'bai viewed that proposals for unification in Africa have been problematic. “Neither cogent economic and geographic factors (as in Senegambia), nor a fervent belief in African unity (as exemplified by the members of the Ghana-Guinea- Mali “Union of African States”) appeared sufficiently strong to overcome the centrifugal forces resulting from independence.”¹⁸³ Therefore, centrifugal forces contributed to The Gambia-Senegal political conflicts. However, if interstate territorial pressures cause tough interstate struggles over transport and other issues that lead to “a cold war” between the two countries,” the two countries swiftly attempt to improve relations.¹⁸⁴ This makes interstate relations fascinating.

Interstate cooperative and uncooperative acts existed side by side. In 1980, when Senegal had to close 23 missions abroad including those in Guinea Bissau and Mali due to economic crisis in the country, it maintained its mission in The Gambia.¹⁸⁵ The two countries also sought to harmonise their positions at meetings of regional and international organisations. But

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 5-6.

¹⁸⁴ See Codu Mbassy Diene-Njie, *Gambia: The Fall of The Old Order, The Senegambia Confederation and Beyond* (Dakar: Les edition Cheikh Anta Diop, 1996).

¹⁸⁵ “Senegal closes 23 missions,” *The Gambia News Bulletin*, July 10, 1980.

amidst these events, they failed to come to terms on whether to construct or not to construct the Trans-Gambia Bridge.¹⁸⁶ Interstate relations are clearly complex and dynamic, as we will see in the other chapters that follow this one. Next, we conclude this chapter before moving to chapter 3.

2.8: Conclusion

This chapter explored how institutional systems structured discord and harmony in interstate relations. It also explored how continuities and discontinuities in cross-border social and political systems reinforced interstate political difficulties or harmony in The Gambia-Senegal relations. It has discussed the nuanced nature of state-society relations. It also introduced the border areas, which are the case study sites for this study. It also briefly introduced the themes of transport, trade and *talibee* or religious networks to prepare us for engaging with them in subsequent chapters. It gave examples of how metaphors and social idioms of relations were integrated in the practices of ordinary people and politicians as they work around cross-border, interstate and state-society dynamics in Senegambia. Thus, the chapter sets the ground for discussing chapter 3, which explores how cross-border transport was anchored in cultural and religious values and how that helped to advance the interests of both state and non-state actors who were connected to it.

¹⁸⁶“Joint Communiqué, “*Thee Gambia News Bulletin*, May 31, 1979, 4.

CHAPTER 3

TRANSPORT, CROSS-BORDER PRACTICES AND INTERSTATE POLITICAL RELATIONS

“May the spirit of friendship and good neighbourliness that has always characterised the relationship between our two peoples continue to grow from strength to strength.”¹⁸⁷
(Gambian President Sir Dawda Jawara wrote to Senegalese President Abdou Diouf, April 1990).

“The chauffeur is never dependable.”
(A Wollof saying).

3.0: Interstate Relations and Transport

From an empiricist viewpoint, conflict and cooperation in the cross-border transport sector embodies the intermingling of what Lonsdale called the “high politics of the state” and the “deep politics of society.”¹⁸⁸ Economic and interpersonal transactions in the sector are complex. Transporters’ everyday practices and attitudes are anchored in Senegambian culture, traditional and modern economic motives and state-centric ideas.¹⁸⁹ Thus, the cross-border transport sector embodies the co-extension between Senegambian social spheres and the political domain. This hybridised character of the sector partly explains why it is both a source of friction and cooperation in interstate relations.

¹⁸⁷“Sir Dawda’s message to Diouf,” *The Gambia Weekly*, April 6, 1990, 3.

¹⁸⁸ John Lonsdale, “Political accountability in African history,” in Patrick Chabal, ed., *Political Domination in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 126- 157.

¹⁸⁹ The empiricist approach in social anthropology draws from Federick Barth’s ‘transactional’ viewpoint, which is an offshoot of the functionalist tradition propounded by Malinowski and Raymond Firth. The transactional approach is also closely linked with the structural-functionalism Radcliffe-Brown, Fortes, Gluckman and their followers theorised. These are interested in directly- observing face-to-face behaviour of communities as they interact in their day-to-day activities. Also see Edmund Leach, *Culture and Communication, The Logic by which symbols are connected, An Introduction To the Use of Structural Analysis In Social Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 1-16.

This chapter studies how cultural norms are embedded in interstate and cross-border relations around transport. The main question it explores is: how did cross-border transport historically adapt to cultural and religious structures in Senegambia to promote cross-border and interstate cooperation, and how did this degenerate causing political difficulties for The Gambia-Senegal relations? Chapter 2 highlighted how state logics intersected social rhetoric and indigenous principles of cooperation in interstate relations. This chapter discusses how transporters and politicians instrumentalised cultural norms and practices to promote cross-border and interstate relations.

In order to understand the history and changing conditions in cross-border transport in Senegambia, it is useful to draw from some of the ideas Berry used to explain how African agrarian systems work. She argued that in most parts of Africa, access to resources (means of production) and the way these resources are used depend on power dynamics. In turn, power dynamics depend on how cultures define rights and obligations in social, economic and political relations.¹⁹⁰

Similarly, cross-border transport relations in Senegambia are steeped in social, religious, political and economic philosophies. And the sector thrives at the intersection of culture, religion, politics and economics. These domains create a fertile ground for transporters to use multiple resources that are at their disposal to pursue their economic interests. This flexibility reflects in the inconsistent attitudes and practices in the transport sector. It also underpins how state logics interact with transporters' economic logics, which leads to both conflict and cooperation in the sector.

The mix-matching of attitudes and practices in the transport sector replays how Gambian and Senegalese states routinely use kinship ideas in interstate communication, even though states talk to other states using

¹⁹⁰Sara S. Berry, *No Condition is Permanent, The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

formalistic language.¹⁹¹ This process is also connected to a more extensive practice in which both politicians and ordinary Senegambians use kinship language to foster relations that happen in other contexts. The use of cultural tools can be circumstantial. But this does not imply that these cultural resources are always subject to daily changes and redefinitions.¹⁹² People can use kinship language in different contexts. However, terms like *dome-ndeye*, *dome-baaye* and *wullere* have bounded meanings. They signify familial and social bonds and denote lateral or hierarchical social relations and/or power structures (see chapter 1). They also sanction cross-border *mboh*k ties and the privileges that grow from them. For example, in 1967, Senegalese authorities officially appealed to Gambian authorities for “sympathetic consideration” to bring at par fare tariffs on the Trans-Gambia ferries with those in Senegal.¹⁹³ The phrase “sympathetic consideration” comes from the social value *ndimbalante*, the corner stone of *dome-ndeye* ties and relations inspired by *wullere*. It means empathy and being your brother’s keeper. In a prototypical response, Gambian authorities consented to the Senegalese request. This example historicises the contemporary use of kinship metaphors in interstate political communication and how cultural resources are used flexibly. Notwithstanding, the meanings associated with these typical Senegambian kinship terminologies leave little or no leeway for reinterpretation.

We can contextualise some historical and socially-contingent practices in the transport sector to show that although culture is dynamic, there are however, some cultural forms and institutions in Senegambia that do not seem to change. For example, Senegambian Muslims use cola nuts

¹⁹¹Writers like Kopytoff view that there is a fundamental cultural unity in Africa, but this view essentialises African cultures as bounded. Mudimbe and others have argued that this view ignores the diverse cultural and social thoughts in even within one African state. See Igor Kopytoff, *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (A Midland Book) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 10; V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge (African Systems of Thought)* 1st Edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

¹⁹² For more on this see Berry, *No Condition is Permanent...* 1993.

¹⁹³ Executive Secretary, Secretariat Permanent Senegambien, Bathurst, The Gambia, 8th July 1968, Ref: SG/1301/ (6); Trans-Gambia is the dominant route for transit traffic to Cassamance.

to negotiate and tie marriages. This practice has been going on for several generations and there is no indication that “modernity” will change it. The practice for a man to offer bridal gifts to his new wife or wife- to-be also endures. Joking relations have similarly endured in Senegambia. These facts imply culture can be both bounded and unbounded depending on the durability of certain practices which social groups consider as core to their uniqueness as a people. The above vision of culture is well-articulated by Kluckhohn’s point that:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit, and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values.¹⁹⁴

Cultural practices may change or endure depending on the values attached to them. The way some Senegambian cultural ideas endure over others reflects this reality. Evans- Pritchard argued that to understand social change, we must engage with history, which mirrors social change.¹⁹⁵ As such, it is useful to identify the practices and behaviour of transporters under the joint transport network and under the disintegrated transport system in order to know how history, culture and social change affected relations in cross-border transport, transporter-state and interstate relations in Senegambia.

Irrespective of the enduring quality of kinship discourses, Senegambian culture has not prevented interstate transport cooperation from degenerating into acute rivalries. Therefore, we can use the transport sector to identify the complex nature of state-society and interstate relations in Senegambia. We can also identify how personal logics can also contribute to conflict in society and how conflict can sometimes yield positive outcomes in relations.

¹⁹⁴ Richard Kluckhohn, ed. *Culture And Behavior, Collected Essays of Clyde Kluckhohn* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), 73.

¹⁹⁵ Edward Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology and Other Essays, An investigation of the aims and methods of modern anthropology by one of its major figures* (New York: The Free Press, 1962), 180.

The first part of the chapter discusses how politicians utilised cultural resources to structure the joint cross-border transport network in Senegambia. In return, transporters also appropriated similar resources to guide their economic relations. The second part of the chapter details an ethnography conducted on the cross-border transport sector. It shows how transporters' practices complemented interstate cooperative policies on transport and contributed to a stable cross-border transport market and to predictable economic relations. It also identifies some conflict-prone practices that contributed to the disintegration of the joint transport network. This is followed by the chapter's conclusion. The historicising of conflict-prone and cooperative attitudes in interstate and cross-border transport relations guides us to chapters 4 and 5. These two chapters deal with more contemporary issues in cross-border transport and interstate relations.

We dedicate chapters 3, 4 and 5 to transport since it has shaped interstate relations in a major way from colonial times to contemporary life. Additionally, the political struggles in the sector provide good examples of how *dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye* sentiments are manifested in socio-political and economic relations. The sector also embodies a more nuanced representation of Senegambian socio-political, economic and religious contexts. It also straddles the public-private domain. Conflicts in the sector relate to both government (public) and private-operated (individuals) commercial transport modes. Issues about transport have a greater potential to shift interstate relations when compared to the domains of trade and *talibee* (religious) networks. These two domains are the subject of chapters 6 and 7, respectively.¹⁹⁶ Transport also mediates economic relations, interstate politics and grassroots engagement in Senegambia. The next sections identify the ways the sector has acted as both a cohesive and a divisive political instrument in Senegambia.

¹⁹⁶See, Jean- Marie Cour and Serge Snrech, introduction to *Preparing for the future, a vision of West Africa in the year 2020, West Africa long-term perspective study*, ed. Jean-Marie Cour and Serge Snrech (OECD, Club Du Sahel: Paris, 1998)

3.1: Interstate Routes: Connecting Cross-Border Communities

The Gambia-Senegal policy cooperation on roads fostered *dome-ndeye* ties in Senegambia. The 1965 Agreement on Road and Transport and the 1970 agreement on Road Transport, created nine inter-state routes, which connected cross-border communities and transit traffic in Senegambia. Five of these routes were located along the Banjul-Barra (Karang-Amdallai) and Trans-Gambia (Farrafenni-Keur Ayib) border areas.¹⁹⁷ Overall, these roads redefined the barrier functions of the border. People located on both sides of the border could easily and frequently travel across it.

Good roads promoted cross-border sociality, trade, and outreach. Cross-border road connections embodied the Senegambian Wollof social dictum that “*tangh moi dox mbokh*,” (the feet strengthen kinship or the feet walk kinship). This Wollof saying expresses the importance placed on social visitations and outreach in society. Therefore, the location of interstate routes followed Senegambian cultural logics of exchange and outreach and were a symbolic articulation of Senegambian one-ness. They mimicked the moral drive behind the creation of Karang, Amdallai, and Ker Ayib border settlements (see chapter 2). Infused with the language of unity and togetherness, the roads were also a coded representation of the Senegambian social order and social institutions. Thanks to the roads, cross-border economic and social activities flourished for the mutual benefits of people on both sides of the border. As a political feat, the interstate road building partnership was rooted in state logics, too.

The lack of a 50-50 distribution of the cross-border roads for either side of the border was at face value an unequal standard of distribution. But in spirit, this act was equitable. The location of the new road networks and vehicle access rules were also informed by longstanding patterns of mobility, social contact and exchange. Instructively, these rules communicated the

¹⁹⁷ Before the 1965 Agreement on road and transport, there was the 1956 Trans-Gambia Road and Ferry: Agreements with the Government-General of French West Africa (March 10, 1956). The 1970 agreement established the interstate routes.

cultural ethics for sharing, values for equity, compromise and safeguarding the collective interest.

Based on culture-driven strategies, Gambian commercial vehicles were authorised to ply between three interstate traffic points namely, Kaolack–Farrafenni-Kaolack and Farrafenni-Zinguinchor-Farrafenni. Senegalese vehicles ran traffic from Kaolack-Zinguinchor-Kaolack, effectively connecting North Senegal to Casamance via River Gambia. Consequently, cross-border road networks linked different cross-border rural communities. These communities were also connected to urban centers in both The Gambia and Senegal. The two countries blended the culture of the people and the culture of the state to negotiate the transport partnership and route distribution.

They also cooperated in building transport infrastructure such as roads. This eased border administration, opened up isolated border communities and created new economic opportunities for border communities. It also strengthened existing indigenous modes of habitation and production (see chapter 2).

For the state, and as shown in the next section, it facilitated institutional adaptation, which helped to control the territorial pressures the border created in The Gambia-Senegal relations. Additionally, it enabled the state to better perform its statehood at its margins through the establishment of new sites for border administration. Thus, interstate road construction appropriately reflected *dome-ndeye* sentiments of rule. It promoted uniformity, cooperation and at the same time diversity in the pursuit of state logics and cultural goals.

3.2: Documentary Requirements, Institutional Arrangements and Road Safety Policies

Indigenous and state-centric institutional forms and techniques of operation guided The Gambia-Senegal transport cooperation. *Mbokh* and *dome-ndeye* sentiments provided fitting foundations for formulating policies that are mutually beneficial for people in both countries. However, interstate transport arrangements were also informed by international standards. The policies were a "...progress in defining the international system of road routes."¹⁹⁸ For example, cross-border drivers from both countries were required to obtain:

- A three-year valid government authorisation issued by the Motor Licensing Authority, for The Gambia, and *Services des Transports Routier*, for Senegal.
- Registration numbers (Gambian vehicles, Gambian registration numbers and same for Senegalese ones)
- A driving license, or permit *de conduire, patente*, insurance and road tax.

The two states also set rules on maximum authorised load sizes for vehicles, the carrying / seat capacity for each type of vehicle, road worthiness tests, roadworthiness certification, motor vehicle insurance and third party insurance.

The documents drivers were required to obtain were all state-issued, except for the insurance, which was provided by private insurance companies. The two countries also ensured that state-issued documents could be obtained from either side of the border, through an inter-state processing system.¹⁹⁹ The Gambia's Motor Licensing Authority collaborated with the Senegalese High Commission in Banjul to facilitate the interstate processing system in the country. In Senegal, *Services des Transports Routier* also collaborated with the High Commission of The Gambia in

¹⁹⁸Howe, "The Future of Surface..." 1975, 322.

¹⁹⁹Road and Transport Agreement, ...1970.

Dakar, for the same purpose and in *mbokh* style. The road networks supported Senegambian cultural ambitions, social thoughts and the united Senegambia dream.

If the roads had social motivations, they never lacked political goals, too. Cross-border roads facilitated border administration for the state and were important tools for pursuing the state's political interests. That meant Senegal could better police its borders in protecting its national economic interests. For The Gambia, the ease of mobility resulting from the roads boosted its re-export trade, which has long been disapproved by Senegal. The roads like the border were simultaneously symbols of solidarity and division for Senegambia. Berry has similarly identified that policies of colonial governments in Africa also had such double-edged effects like these interstate roads. Colonial policies sought to dominate and economically exploit the colonies. But in the process, these policies co-opted and restructured African cultural experience and expression, "traditional" African systems of power, and production.²⁰⁰ Interstate road networks bridged Senegambia, but at the same time, they created barriers. State border administration created new havens for controlling cross-border traffic and this fueled smuggling of controlled goods from The Gambia into Senegal. As reflected in the next section, such effects of interstate road cooperation gave rise to new opportunities and complexities in interstate relations (see also chapter 4 & 5).

3.3: The Effects of Interstate Cooperation on Transport

The Gambia-Senegal 1970 Agreement on Roads and Transport and interstate transport policies created new economic opportunities for cross-border transport in Senegambia. Senegalese citizens were quick to start cross-border and domestic transport businesses in The Gambia. By 1982, the Senegambia Confederation also made it easy for diverse corps of Senegalese migrant workers, including transporters, to make a "mass

²⁰⁰ Berry, *No Condition is Permanent...* 1993.

exodus” to The Gambia. Gambia-based Senegalese transporters operated vehicles that were registered in The Gambia. They monopolised both domestic and cross-border transport in the country.²⁰¹ The Gambia government-owned transport company, The Gambia Public Transport Corporation (GPTC), became the only competitor to Senegalese transporters in the cross-border market. GPTC operated bus services connected rural and urban Gambia and also Banjul-Dakar.

The joint transport network also created interconnected motor park facilities (also known as garages), that linked Senegambia’s domestic and cross-border traffic, Banjul and Dakar. The Banjul-Barra ferry crossing connected Banjul and Barra, with cross-border motor park located in Barra. Cars from there connected traffic on the north and south banks of The Gambia River. They also connected traffic to the Amdallai-Karang border through the north bank trunk road. This traffic went as far as Kaolack, Dakar and to other places in Senegal. In Dakar, Pompier was the official location for cross-border transport to The Gambia.²⁰² Farrafenni linked the north of the river to the south, and it boosted the cross-border traffic as a center for both domestic and cross-border traffic to Casamance.

The interstate transport cooperation had geographical, cultural and economic significance. Cross-border road networks and motor parks created overlaps and intersections for cross-border traffic and eased economic and social outreach. Social familiarity deepened. Economic transactions also increased. The two countries also harmonised their fare systems, which reduced travel costs and enabled passengers to pay lower fares to their destinations. The interchange facilities also reduced passengers’ travel time. For example, a vehicle can directly travel from point A (Barra) to point B (Dakar), without encountering obstacles at the border and passengers can pay only one fare for the whole trip. Cheap fares encouraged more cross-

²⁰¹My own father migrated from Senegal to The Gambia and invested in transport and hotel related businesses in the country.

²⁰²Pompier is Dakar’s main and most popular public motor park for private commercial automobile vehicles

border travel on both sides of the border. Investors responded to the rising demand for transport services. They bought more cars for commercial transport and thus increased the fleet size of the cross-border network.

Transporters, other citizens and politicians shared the benefits of the interstate political alliance on transportation. But some of the social gains the interstate transport cooperation yielded had negative effects. People from both sides of the border increased their knowledge of each other. But too much sociality and political camaraderie burdened Senegambian relations lending credence to the English proverb “familiarity breeds contempt.” *Dome-baaye* sentiments gradually took root from the social and economic benefits of the transport alliance. Economic competition intensified in the cross-border transport sector.

State logics depleted the goodwill for interstate transport cooperation. However, conflicts of interests in political and economic goals never stopped the two countries from moving towards closer ties. Political turbulence in The Gambia in 1980 and 1981, created the opportunity for the two countries to try political integration. In 1982, without holding a referendum in both countries, Presidents Sir Dawda Jawara and Abdou Diouf signed a hasty treaty which established the Senegambia Confederation (see chapters 1 & 2). But the political returns of the Confederation were short-lived. Interstate political disputes were augmented, leading to the collapse of the joint transport network (see chapters 4 & 5). But before discussing interstate transport conflicts, we will discuss the ethnography below to identify the outcomes the joint transport network and interstate transport cooperation have had, at grassroots level.

3.4: An Ethnography of Cross-Border Transport

In previous sections of this chapter, we argued that cultural ideas have been used to maintain an enduring claim that Gambians and Senegalese are one people, irrespective of the colonial history. These cultural ideas, which fostered the economic goals of different Senegambians, also promoted the political logics of both the Gambian and Senegalese states. However,

historical changes like the partition and the linking of cross-border communities through the construction of road networks transformed Senegambian social structure. Structure is used here to mean “an historical expression to denote a set of relations known to have endured over a considerable period of time.”²⁰³ The road networks signified changes in the transport sector and in the Senegambian social structure. But the dynamic nature of both the transport sector and the social structure is muted in the kinship discourses. The ethnography on the working of the transport sector therefore highlights the nuances of the sector and interpersonal relations.

First, the two countries built roads that connected cross-border communities. Secondly, they established a uni-modal transport sub-system that operated through joint cross-border motor parks. These motor parks served as terminal points for domestic and cross-border automobile transport. Cross-border motor parks were constructed on communal land and were strategically located and easily accessible for the cross-border traffic. Communities benefited socially and economically from hosting motor parks, symbols of the Senegambian idiom “*mbolu muye dole*,” (unity is strength). This sentiment made the border a line of continuity.²⁰⁴ The use of communal land to host social projects has been part of Senegambian culture. Adopting this practice in the transport sector reinforced local people’s agency to have a say in the local-level operations of the sector. Local people adopted local names and local knowledge in identifying these public motor parks. Cross-border motor parks, like domestic ones, were locally known as *garaso* or *garas* (both words are corrupted versions of the English word garage).²⁰⁵

The internal rules each motor park devised were based on the collective inputs of drivers who operated from there. The *chef de garage* (the chief of the garage) was chiefly responsible for the organisation, operation and management of the garage. Garage functionaries locally called *cocksor*

²⁰³ Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology*...1962, 181.

²⁰⁴This saying means togetherness or unity is strength.

²⁰⁵The former is used by Mandinkas and the latter is used by Wollofs.

or *ralluman* assisted him. Attempts to find out the origins of both words did not yield any definite answers. However, *cocksor* sounds like the English word cock-sure. Perhaps, the word derives from Pidgin English and might come from a colonial source. It could have been used to depict the over-zealous confidence garage functionaries exhibit in their work.²⁰⁶

Drivers in the motor park can be categorised into two, based on the ownership of the transport they operated. The first were entrepreneur drivers who acquired their cars through personal savings, loans from financial institutions, or through funds from family sources. They oversaw and controlled the operation of their vehicles. Barbie Toure and Pa Ibrahima Toure both belong to this category.²⁰⁷ The second category consisted of patron-hired drivers, who were employee drivers operating vehicles belonging to a patron. The patron remunerated their services based on a salary or a weekly pay. Depending on arrangements in place, patron-hired drivers remitted trip monies to the patron daily, weekly (Sundays), or monthly.²⁰⁸ This remittance of trip monies is known as *werse*. Each driver had a male assistant locally called *apparante*, a corrupted version of the English word apprentice. This person was usually an aspiring future driver. Each driver was therefore a patron to an apprentice.

The driver-apprentice relationship is an example of how Senegambia's commercial automobile sector adopted socially embedded practices. Formalities observed in traditional Senegambian occupational apprenticeships were used for negotiating the relationship between the two individuals. Traditionally, a parent, guardian or other senior representative of the prospective apprentice presented cola nuts to the desired patron, to introduce and negotiate the apprenticeship.²⁰⁹ If the patron accepted the

²⁰⁶ The Gambia was a former British colony and Senegal was colonised by the French. However, due to the intimate social environment, words and terms are borrowed and adopted from one side of the border to the other. There needs to be further research to identify the true origins of these words.

²⁰⁷ he former is the president of the Senegalese Transport Association, Keur Ayib branch and the latter is a retired cross-border driver from Keur Ayib, Senegal.

²⁰⁸ Sundays were generally times for rest for most commercial drivers.

²⁰⁹ Cola nuts are used in many Senegambian social rituals.

cola nuts (which was usually the case), the “contract” for a patron-apprentice relationship was endorsed. This is a common way of formalising new social ties, including marriages, affective parent-child or sister-brother relations in Senegambia. These relations were expected to endure based on *wullere* (see chapter 2).

The apprentice learned from his patron. His tasks included collecting fares during trips, cleaning the car (sometimes daily), learning to fix small mechanical problems on the car and running errands for his patron. In return for these services, the patron gave him scheduled driving lessons, meals, sometimes accommodation and a token amount daily, weekly, or monthly, depending on the preferences of the patron.

Patron-apprentice ties usually endured after the end of the apprenticeship. Due to *wullere*, the apprentice and his family showed honour and regards to the former, even if he failed to offer any post-apprenticeship assistance like helping his former apprentice to acquire a car and set up a new transport business. The relationship between the two endured as an inter-family bond that developed into *mbohko*.²¹⁰ If a patron and an apprentice came from different sides of the border, this further reinforced cross-border ties.

The garage or motor park operated along a network of relations, defined by solidarity and kinship considerations. It had a system of income redistribution and informal social insurance for different members working there. Drivers paid toll fees (referred to as *toe*) to the garage. Additionally, they paid *maanda* (commission) on each trip loaded from the garage. Other forms of duty payments were imposed too, depending on internal arrangements within a particular garage. These monies contributed towards administrative taxes, remuneration for garage officials, funds for garage development initiatives and sometimes towards internal driver assistance programmes during somber moments (e.g. funerals) or for celebratory personal events such as weddings, and naming ceremonies. Drivers also

²¹⁰This word means kinship relations.

paid road-user fees to the state as well as daily duties to the local administration (government). These monies are expected to fund garage and other local development initiatives in the community.

Senegambian social value for age was also reflected among garage communities. Garage functionaries usually consisted of retired drivers and senior members of the garage. Drivers who were no longer active on the roads, either because they lost their car or for other reasons, were also employed as functionaries, to help them get by financially. This practice, like the practice of pooling money to remunerate the *chef* and his assistants, were rooted in Senegambian social ethics.

The day-to-day running of the garage mixed traditional consensus building mechanisms with rudimentary modern techniques of administration. For example, cars were scheduled on first come bases. Upon arrival at the garage, a driver joined the *raang* or queue, to register a turn for another trip with the *cocksor* or *ralluman*. The different queues were differentiated by the destination of the vehicle. A small enclosed space with a window wide enough for transactions or a shade within the garage, served as the office space for registrations. A ledger book and a pen or sometimes a chalk and an erasable board were used to enter the vehicle numbers based on the sequence of arrival. The *cocksor*, *ralluman* and other functionaries helped to direct passengers to the next car in line. Passengers paid their fares to one of these garage officials who were responsible for loading the car, assigning tickets and seats to passengers. At full board, total fare monies were calculated and paid to the driver who paid duties owed to the garage, from the amount. Depending on internal garage arrangements, paid luggage fees went to the “account” for the remuneration of officials. But at times, the driver took half of it and the other half went to the garage coffers.

Garage-based social ties were modeled on culture-embedded relations of intimacy that endured. Old or retired drivers had claims to the resources of the garage community in the same way older children assume the financial responsibilities of their aged parents in Senegambia. However,

the garage was a site that fused history, culture and modernity to achieve or sustain its goals and objectives. It maintained certain cultural practices in its administration. It also adopted modern rudimentary administrative techniques in its management practices. In short, the garage was a dynamic site that had a rolling culture. Transporters' shared experiences of the border exemplified the hybridised attitudes in the transport sector, which yielded both *dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye* dynamics, as elaborated in the next section.

3.4.1: Transporters' Shared Experience and the Border

The interviews I conducted to collect life histories of transporters showed that a thread of a shared cross-border past runs through the life histories of transporters. All interviewees have lived, at one time or another, on both sides of the border as a driver or apprentice. Most of them also shared other forms of associative life such as being *talibee* or members of the same clerical establishments, former apprenticeship comrades, former roommates, friends and some served as emissaries for the marriage proposals of their colleagues. The nature of the driving profession (the spirit of the road) too, further cemented ties among them. Therefore, inter-driver solidarity was natural and their practices from the garage to the roads were embedded in *dome-ndeye* attitudes.

Cross-border routes pass through isolated, bushy or uninhabited spaces as much as they do through towns and villages along the routes. Road practices among drivers included making brief stops along the road to share information like road conditions and check points mounted by state security agents. Drivers also provided mechanical support to each other like lending spare tyres, small equipment to fix punctures, or getting mechanics to each other, especially at isolated places. Driver peer-support also had monetary aspects. For example, if one driver suffered a major breakdown on the road, other drivers passing along the road with unoccupied seats, stopped to take his passengers at a reduced fare. This enabled him to keep the remaining part of the fares as compensation. Usually, if the breakdown

happened close to the final destination of the car, passengers would be taken for gratis. These “brother and friend” considerations helped drivers during breakdowns on trips, to avoid unnecessary monetary losses.

Cross-border drivers also shared the common practice of acquiring the national papers (national IDs) of both The Gambia and Senegal. For example, Barbie Toure, president of the Senegalese Transport Association in Keur Ayib, has family on both sides of the border. When he retired from his driving career, he returned to his other family in Senegal and became a unionist. His Gambian-born family remained in The Gambia. In 2013, his eldest Gambian child was going to senior secondary school and he hoped that, after he completed school, he would find a job in the country.²¹¹

Cross-border drivers were also subjected to social stereotypes in Senegambia. For example, driver stereotypes are prominently articulated in the saying “the chauffeur is not dependable.”²¹² This saying reflects how many people in society see drivers as self-interested, self-centered or egoist people who could vandalise social solidarity to safeguard narrow economic goals. There is a widespread social view that drivers constantly victimise passengers by overcharging fares, especially during periods of high demand for transport services. Commercial drivers who went on long-haul trips, are considered to be the most “un-dependable.” Their fortune hunting spirit makes them prioritise personal gains over all other things.

But driver social stereotypes ignore the useful roles drivers play in society. Transporters make immense contributions to social outreach. Cross-border and other long distant drivers acted as trusted message bearers between urban and isolated rural settings. They provided reliable courier services for monies, gifts and other unescorted commodities during their trips. Therefore, they facilitated social needs, exchange and outreach among different individuals. The interplay of these two narratives about drivers, like many other stories in Senegambia, create a *mélange* of narratives, which

²¹¹This was disclosed to me in a private conversation with Barbie Toure, Keur Ayib, Senegal, 20th February, 2013.

²¹²The word chauffeur refers to a driver.

contribute to the contested nature of cross-border, interstate, transporter-state and state-society relations. Such narratives also show that culture is dynamic and change can alter social practices.

The negative social impressions of drivers derived from popular views that the garage is a notorious space and community where, both the young and old cross all red lines of social taboos. The garage culture embodied a “rogue culture” which encouraged exploitation of travelers and female petty traders (girls and women) trading there. Individuals whose daily lives revolved around the garage were termed as deficient in values of self-restraint, civility and respect. They were considered ruthless, aggressive fighters with little or no moral inclination.²¹³

However, garage people challenged these negative social views of their space. For example, 39 year-old Aly Sall, a garage functionary at the Seleti garage, has a different view of the garage and driving careers.²¹⁴ He argued in an interview with me that,

The garage is not just a place for getting a means of livelihood. It is also a place which instills certain qualities in the individual to help him better navigate social relations. Garage functionaries come across or receive all kinds of people in the garage- the *khelifa* (a grand or elderly person in Wollof), or even a *jinne* (a devil in Wollof). This is why workers need to have certain qualities.²¹⁵

Sall dropped out of school and frustrated by his inability to find a “proper” job in Senegal, joined the garage located literally in front of his family home’s doorstep. He sustains his wife, children and old mother from working there. Irrespective of his view about the cultured nature of the garage, his mother Mere Fatou Sall wishes her son had a better job than the one he has.

Fundamentally, the different social representation of the garage carry insightful views of how community “values, practices and meanings are shared, albeit contested.”²¹⁶ Like the different views of the garage, Senegambian kinship theories can be contested on the basis that not every

²¹³I got this from a conversation I witnessed many years ago while in The Gambia. A group of women at the Brikama market shared their views about the garage following a fight between two apprentices.

²¹⁴ Seleti is in Casamance, Senegal. It is the border with Gambia in The Gambia.

²¹⁵Interview with Aly Sall, Seleti, Senegal, 25th February, 2013.

²¹⁶Elizabeth Frazer, *The Problems of Communitarian Politics, Unity and Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3.

Gambian is related to a Senegalese by blood. But restricting the definition of kinship to blood ties means denying Senegambian kinship theories their extensive and varied essences. Consequently, this would hinder our understanding of why people work with kinship under different contexts and circumstances and why kinship discourses have endured for generations. Implicitly, social thoughts like social practices are dynamic and their dynamism makes them part of a living culture, the essence of every thriving society.

Transporters' self-perception has interesting dimensions, too. They consider themselves as constant victims of the state that wishes to exploit them through transport-related tax regimes. Cross-border drivers therefore see themselves as members of the same family, who are subject to the same cruel rules of the state. This is why routinely during border blockades on The Gambia, Senegalese transporters argued that their unilateral border closure was against the Gambian state and security forces and not against Gambian drivers, their purported *dome-ndeyes* (see chapters 4 and 5).²¹⁷ This argument is hard to rationalise. But it is the usual addendum to cross-border conversations on transport difficulties. Driver-passenger relations can be bordered like driver-state relations, but transporters present cross-border inter-transporter solidarity as uncontestable. However, the disintegration of the integrated transport network after the year 2000, questions the validity of the resilient solidarity among Senegambian drivers. The next section explores the bases of transporter solidarity, recollections of the integrated transport network and how the sector subsequently evolved, towards disintegration.

²¹⁷Interview with Bachirou Ndiaye, Dakar, Senegal, 16th May, 2013.

3.4.2: Personal Recollections of the Integrated Transport Network

Personal memories of the integrated transport network manifest how kinship ideas defined the workings of the cross-border transport network. They also help us trace how the transport sector evolved to incorporate *dome-baaye* practices. Those behaviour models created conditions for its disintegration and fueled recurring interstate difficulties over The Gambia and Senegal border (see chapters 4 & 5).

From the memories of both drivers and non-drivers (users of transport services), the integrated transport network was boosted by *mbokh* and *dome-ndeye* attitudes. I share below the accounts of two women who I interviewed during my fieldwork. Both women are extensively familiar with life at The Gambia-Senegal border.

Mere Olu Fatou Sall, Aly Sall's mother, was 80 years old at the time of my interview with her in 2013. Her neighbour and best friend, Mere Fatou Jarjue, was 5 years younger than her. The two women came to Seleti (Mere Olu was only 14), as newly married young brides to their *douanes* husbands, who lived in the village of only two compounds. Seleti then was like no-man's land and they were among the first people to settle at the *douane* post, which comprised residences for 4 *douaniers* and their *chef de poste*.²¹⁸

The *douane* post is located about a kilometre away from Giboroh, the Gambian village bordering Seleti. Both villages are on the main road to Brikama, the regional headquarters of The Gambia's West Coast Region. Traffic from Casamance usually passes through Seleti and Giboroh, to other parts of The Gambia.

The two women recalled that vehicles with Gambian registration numbers dominated cross-border traffic between Brikama and Casamance. "In those days, Senegalese chauffeurs were rare here. Only the ones from *Gambie* came here. They drove to Diouloulou, Bignona and Zinguinchor."²¹⁹ "Seleti never had a motor park. The cars used to stop- by, pick passengers

²¹⁸ Interview with Mere Fatou Jarjue and Mere Olu Fatou Sall, Seleti, Senegal, 27th February, 2013

²¹⁹ Interview with Mere Fatou Jarjue, Seleti, Senegal, 27th February 2013. The chauffeurs were mostly Senegalese but the cars were registered in The Gambia.

and continue on their journey. From *Gambie*, they only stopped in Diouloulou which had a garage.”²²⁰ As “Gambian” cars dominated the cross-border routes, the integrated transport network and the Senegambian automobile sector inadvertently groomed a future source of jealousies and fierce competition.

Barbie Toure’s personal recollections validated the women’s memories of the integrated transport network. Toure started driving on the interstate routes in 1979. He recalled that, “...cars were not plenty. The buses and the bigger cars were not running. Only the small and medium cars served transport. The roads were good. The sector was great. Between 1986 and 1987, more cars came and we started experiencing more accidents. And now, the roads are very bad.”²²¹

At the height of the motor park sharing, “...the 400 (*quatre-cent*) *mbarr* was one of the popular car brands in the market. Subsequently, the *sept-places* (7-seated passenger cars) and the *mini-cars* (mini-buses) became favourites in the market.”²²² Pa Ibrahima Toure, a retired driver at Keur Ayib also shared his nostalgia about the integrated transport network.

I drove at the frontier on the Dakar-Karang- Banjul route for 20 years. I also drove Zinguinchor–Dakar for about 10 years. In the past, authority on the roads - whether the gendarme or the police - made us observe road safety and security measures. Those were days of professional regulation and professional conduct across the board. No one dared override the law or the other person. For example, you could never drive in worn-out tyres.²²³

These memories of the joint transport network reveal an orderly, trustful and a professionally regulated interdependent transport environment reminiscent of the fabric metaphor. Cross-border transporters’ ability to indiscriminately access credit facilities to finance their transport entrepreneurship also indicates the sector comprised cooperative and trustful attitudes. These opportunities would however dry up as interstate transport and political difficulties escalate in Senegambia.

²²⁰Interview with Mere Olu Sall, Seleti, Senegal, 27th February, 2013.

²²¹Interview Barbie Toure, Keur Ayib, Senegal, 12th February, 2013.

²²²Interview with Barbie Toure, president Senegalese Transport Association, Keur Ayib Branch, Keur Ayib, 12th February 2013.

²²³Interview with Pa Ibrahima Toure, retired driver, Keur Ayib, Senegal, 12th February 2013.

In the past, you could get a brand new car on credit. Enterprises like Madi (in The Gambia) brought cars to Kaolack, (Senegal) and drivers bought the cars on credit basis. Other Lebanese businesses provided similar facilities.²²⁴ We advanced part of the payment. The rest of the money was paid by installments. At full payment, the documents you provided as collateral were returned to you. Your ownership of your car is confirmed and you continued your business. You were able to make profit out of it and then you can buy another new car. Transport was profitable then.²²⁵

As a whole, the integrated transport network was a low risk project even for private creditors who loaned cars to transporters. There were racial and cultural differences between Lebanese creditors and their Senegambian debtors. However, their creditor-debtor relation was mutually reassuring. Arguably, this creditor-debtor relationship transpired within Senegambian cultural values, in which debt and debt defaults have negative status. The Wolof proverb “*attey borrh fei*,” which means, the verdict of debt litigation is payment, reaffirms Senegambian views about debt and debt default. The practice of enquiring if a deceased Muslim has debtors during funeral proceedings also provides another interesting ethnography on social perceptions about debt and how that is relevant to our understanding of relations under the integrated transport network.

Like in other cultures, Senegambian culture and Islam consider debt as a burden to be avoided or minimised, at best. From religious and social views, an unpaid debt bars the dead from transitioning to heaven. Usually, Senegambian Muslims would conduct a pre-burial public inquest for their dead. The purpose of this inquiry is to determine whether the deceased was indebted to people. If so, creditors were paid from his or her estate or through family contributions, before burial. Creditors may also opt to forgive their debt, a sign of Islamic charitable act towards the deceased.

The cultural and religious spirit that recommends forgiving the dead their debt, resonates with aspects of global debt relief agenda. The global sustainable development agenda includes debt relief or debt forgiveness for countries overburdened by debt. Even though a state hardly dies like the individual, debt forgiveness for the dead in Senegambian practice is in synch

²²⁴The Lebanese- Syrian –French company Shaben Madi (shortened reference as Madi) is a longstanding dealer of automobiles in The Gambia.

²²⁵Interview with Barbie Toure, Keur Ayib, Senegal, 12th February, 2013.

with international debt relief normative standards. Irrespective of the similarities between Senegambian cultural and Islamic attitudes towards debt and the global agenda for debt relief, Senegambian cultural and religious views of debt contrasts with the state's attitudes towards it. Both the Gambian and Senegalese states have been sustained through debt piled unto debt. At the individual level, social morality dictates that a highly indebted person should frown on taking more debts and should actively work towards settling his/ her creditors to maintain human dignity. But this is not the case for the state. However, like kinship discourses, these values can also be contested even though they can possibly pass for universal norms.

Transport sector creditor-debtor relations reveal how culture and religion provided important resources for the sector to pursue its economic, social and political agenda in Senegambia. The sector reflected the co-extension between state and society. The deep politics of society and the high politics of state intermingled and created an enabling environment for a thriving, profitable and orderly cross-border transport network.²²⁶ However, over time, these *dome-ndeye* oriented institutions and practices degenerated and that led to intense rivalries in the sector (see chapter 4 and 5). By 2000, *dome-baaye* models of behaviour boosted competitive transactions and tense relations jeopardised the fabled cooperation among transporters and between transporters and other actors.

The struggles that emerged in the post-2000 cross-border transport sector were instigated by economic difficulties as the "disposal of scarce resources" led to intense competition among different interests. Thus, economic insecurities altered practices in the transport sector and kinship sentiments degenerated. Interpersonal exchange in the sector became transactional as different actors sought to protect their interests in the market. The next section explores the stresses that led to the crisis, which eventually disintegrated the joint transport network.²²⁷

²²⁶John R Searle, "What is an Institution?" *Journal of Institutional Economics* (2005): 1-22.

²²⁷Lionel Robbins (1935) in Searle, "What is an institution?,...2005, 1.

3.5: Stresses on Interstate Cooperation: Emerging Transport Crisis

The Senegambia Confederation created a population surge in The Gambia as more Senegalese settled in the country. The country also hosted other migrants from other neighbouring countries (see chapter 2).²²⁸ Migrants into The Gambia mainly stayed in urban centers, causing high demand for urban transport services. There was also more pressure on transport infrastructure as the number of cars increased in the country. The government imposed new road user policies, which sparked protests from the sector amid widespread disillusion about the Confederation, which later collapsed in 1989.²²⁹ Domestic protests kick-started The Gambia-Senegal transport difficulties. The crisis later blew over the border, affecting interstate relations. *Dome-ndeye* attitudes receded, and *dome-baaye* sentiments took over interstate relations.²³⁰ By 1989, grassroots transporter protests and bad economic situations in both countries intensified, and not even *wullere* and *mbokh* could pacify the turbulence of interstate relations.²³¹

The transport crisis has been a good example of how state logics impacted interstate relations. National policies are formulated to respond to national needs. However, if those needs conflict with the needs of other states, implementing those policies may create political disenchantment in relations with those states. The transport crisis began as local reactions to government policies, but from 1989, it transformed into The Gambia and Senegal political difficulties.

In October 1989, transporters between Banjul and Serekunda (mostly of Senegalese origin) went on strike after Banjul City Council (BCC)

²²⁸*Ibid.*

²²⁹Pap Saine, "Senegalese banks to undergo restructuring," *The Gambia Weekly*, August 18, 1989, 9.

²³⁰Jeggan C. Senghor, *The Politics of Senegambian Integration, 1958- 1994* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2008); Fafa Edrissa M'bai., *A Senegambian Insight* (Surrey/ Banjul: Fafa E.M. M'bai and Unwin Brothers Ltd., 1992); Dawda K. Jawara, *Kairaba* (Banjul/London: Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, 2009).

²³¹"Confed. Secretariat Donates D17, 420 to School," *The Gambia Weekly*, Friday March 31 (n/a), 4. Kaur, which is located in the lower Saloume, is the birth town of the Confederation.

introduced new tolls and taxes on commercial transport along the Banjul-Serekunda route. The new tariffs were designed to raise 3 million dalasi to finance the Council's development budget to fund improvements to public motor parks and other infrastructure in the city. Transporters rejected the City's new tariff plans. They argued they were not consulted about it and the tariff was unfair because different vehicles with different tonnage were required to pay the same fees. They further argued that public motor parks were in bad state and this was another reason why new tariff policies should be dropped. Some members of the Gambian parliament lobbied for and supported the transporters. They urged the city to revoke its new plans since bad road conditions caused rapid wear and tear to transporter cars. They also requested the city to formulate more favourable tax policies for transporters.²³²

Transporters blocked the city's plans, the city council cancelled the new tariff, and the drivers ended their strike. Transporters' victory against the city set a precedent in transporter-state relations and in the struggles between low and high politics in Senegambia. This crisis signaled the future troubles that would beset the transport sector, transporter-state and interstate relations. The next section explores the future stressors in these different relations.

3.5:1. Post Confederation Interstate Relations

The crisis in the transport sector loomed as crisis in The Gambia-Senegal relations. The border between the two countries hardened after the break-up of the Senegambia Confederation. By 1990, presidents Jawara and Diouf were strongly suspicious about each's intentions and interstate relations spiraled downwards.²³³ President Jawara's memoir revisited the difficult interstate relations. He recounted that President Diouf's *dome-baaye* driven anti-Gambia policy gimmicks sought to destabilise The Gambia's re-export

²³²"Drivers end strike after council apologised," *The Gambia Weekly*, October 20, 1989.

²³³*Ibid.*

trade and handicap cross-border mobility.²³⁴ He imposed a currency restriction on border crossers and Senegalese border enforcement agents harassed Gambian travelers. They also intercepted and seized goods crossing the border.²³⁵

With a thoughtfulness of a *mbokh* and *wullere*, Jawara made personal overtures of a *dome-ndeye*, and a “friend” towards Diouf, to end his anti-Gambia campaign.²³⁶ By August 1990, the two countries signed a protocol of friendship and cooperation. But political turmoil in Senegal made it difficult for the two states to consolidate this agreement. Anti-Diouf rule demonstrators launched street protests, burnt cars, destroyed private properties and looted businesses.²³⁷ By 1994, young officers of The Gambia National Army staged a military coup and deposed Jawara. President Diouf courted The Gambia’s new military leaders. He hoped to get through them what he failed to achieve in his relationship with Jawara, but with hindsight, his efforts would be in vain.

With military rule in The Gambia, Diouf initiated a new strategy to pursue Senegambia integration through harnessing the support of Gambian military personnel and artists. He sidelined intellectuals. Selected Gambian army officials were invited to Dakar and awarded with Senegalese national honorary medallions. Gambians artists, Musa Ngum (in 1999), who was notable for his pro-Senegambia activism and Laba Sosseh (earlier), who like Ngum, made Senegambia reunion the mission of his arts, were both awarded “National Order of Senegal” medals.²³⁸ Opposition parties in Senegal keenly followed and supported Diouf’s agenda. But the *mbokh* or one-Senegambia agenda failed to resonate with the military. It was only a matter of time before Diouf realised that like Jawara, the military had no

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ Jawara, *Kairaba*, 2009.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ “Disturbances mar Senegal’s National Day,” *The Gambia Weekly*, April 6, 1990.

²³⁸ “Musa Ngum gets Senegalese National Order,” *Daily Observer*, April 23, 1999.

plans to compromise The Gambia's independence or help Senegal take over the country in the guise of Senegambia reunification.²³⁹

By August 1994, opposition leader Abdoulaye Wade, who was recently released from detention in Senegal, declared his support for the coup in The Gambia and planned a visit with the new military leaders in Banjul.²⁴⁰ In April 1997, Jammeh visited Dakar, and he and Diouf signed an agreement to reopen The Gambia-Senegal border.²⁴¹ Shortly after the visit, a Gambian trade delegation also visited Senegal to follow-up on the agreement to liberalise the borders for transit trade.²⁴² Chairman Jammeh's visit also yielded a new bilateral agreement - to cooperate in disease control and health.²⁴³ To demonstrate commitment to the renewed zeal for bilateral cooperation, an inter-ministerial conference was convened in Banjul, in October 1997. This was a nice wrapping for their *dome-ndeye* rhetoric.

Senegal's attempt to court the Gambian military ignored the fact that military regimes in Africa were notorious for being "...counterproductive to democratic governance..." and can "...undermine stability and economic development..." with cross-border effects.²⁴⁴ But as the gains in bilateral cooperation were consolidated, new threats confronted cross-border mobility, transport and The Gambia-Senegal interstate relations. These threats opened doors for *dome-baaye* struggles in cross-border transport and in interstate relations, as seen in the next section.

²³⁹Distributed leadership recognises the inclusive and collaborative nature of leadership processes. Diouf's realisation that he could only attain a united Senegambia with the cooperation of Gambian leaders pushed him to mobilise various public opinion and political leaders across the border, hoping to lure them to his cause. Although this did not yield to a federated Senegambia, however, it highlights Diouf's good leadership skills. See Eivor Oborn *et al.*, "Distributed Leadership in Policy Formulation: A Sociomaterial Perspective," *Organization Studies*, 34 2 (2013): 253- 276.

²⁴⁰"Abdoulaye Wade Recently released from Custody by Senegalese government, supports Army coup, to visit AFPRC government," *Daily Observer*, August 15, 1994.

²⁴¹"Senegal- Gambia border open to transit trade following a visit to Senegal by President Jammeh," *Daily Observer*, Monday April 28th, 1997.

²⁴²"Gambian trade delegation goes to Senegal in a bid to bolster newly opened transit trade," *Daily Observer*, May 13, 1997.

²⁴³ "Gambia- Senegal to cooperate on Health with emphasise on disease control, VP Njie-Saidy reveals," *Daily Observer*, Wednesday June 18th, 1997.

²⁴⁴ Mathurin C. Hounnikpo, "Africa's Militaries: A Missing Link in Democratic Transitions," *Africa Security Briefs*, 17 (January 2012), 3.

3.5.2: Conflicts in West Africa and The Gambia-Senegal Relations

The civil wars and conflict in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Guinea Bissau and Casamance, exerted new pressures on The Gambia-Senegal relations. Many refugees from these troubled areas crossed into The Gambia, leading to a refugee crisis in the country. In the midst of the crisis, local media sources reported there was growing crime in the country. They condemned frequent murder cases, armed robbery, drug trafficking, counterfeit currency production and prostitution in urban Gambia. The sources claimed that these crimes were related to the influx of foreigners into the country. They argued that until this huge influx of “foreigners”, the country has been a peaceful one and that before the 1990s, The Gambia was an almost crime-free state.

The Gambian military regime responded to the crisis with “new” foreign policy measures. The policy measures sought to rid the country of “bad elements.” Towards that direction in 1998, a court in Banjul tried and found 30 Senegalese nationals in The Gambia guilty of “roguery and vagabondage,” while resident in the country. The Senegalese pleaded guilty to the charges. The court ordered their deportation to Senegal.²⁴⁵ After these deportations, a new policy to eject Senegalese prostitutes from Serekunda, Brikama, Soma and Farrafenni, followed. As structural adjustment took its toll on Senegalese society during the 1980s, huge numbers of Senegalese prostitutes migrated to these Gambian cities and towns. The Confederation increased the numbers of Senegalese prostitutes in the country as more Senegalese migrated to The Gambia. With a resolute goal to stem out prostitution, the military government also banned skin bleaching, which was a common practice among prostitutes.

Senegal was not impressed with Jammeh’s “new” foreign policy. It saw it as anti-Senegal and a direct confrontation and a grossly un-*mbokhly* act from The Gambia. What started as domestic transport crisis in The

²⁴⁵“Court orders deportation of 30 Senegalese after they pleaded guilty to charges of roguery and vagabondage,” *Daily Observer*, 1st June, 1998.

Gambia took on new dimensions. The two countries headed towards a collision course. The military's political strategy caused a dull lull in efforts to mend The Gambia-Senegal relations. It also affected The Gambia's mediation efforts in the Casamance. *Dome-baaye* rivalries took the best of interstate politics. In the end, the initial efforts to mend interstate relations, took one step forward only to recede many steps backwards.

National security concerns also continued to plague interstate relations after dissident officers of The Gambia National Army attacked the Kartong military barracks, located in the border village of Kartong. The village is right at the frontier with Casamance and hosts one of the key military installations in The Gambia. A rivulet, the Allahein *Bolong*, borders Kartong and Casamance. The attackers attempted without success to depose the government of Yahya Jammeh. They were subdued, arrested and taken to court.

During their trial, the rebel soldiers pleaded that their aim was not to carry out a military coup d'états. They claimed they wanted to steal weapons from the Kartong armouries to sell them to Senegal. The pleas of the rebel soldiers gave the Gambian state more reasons to be suspicious of the intentions of the Senegalese state. This suspicion was heightened when Gambian military intelligence sources disclosed that the Senegalese government housed and assisted the attackers to plan and mobilise for the Kartong attack. The Machiavellian hint of this incident spat more fuel to the fire, re-igniting *dome-baaye* rivalries, and the two states overtly and covertly competed against each other. The fact that some of the attackers were first generation Gambians born to migrant Senegalese families, or had other family connections to Senegal, did not help the situation. Diplomatic attempts to pacify the interstate "misunderstanding" failed to dissipate the suspicion which hung over interstate relations.²⁴⁶ Thus, difficult politics froze interstate rhetoric of *mobkh* and *dome-ndeye*.

²⁴⁶ The use of presidential envoys to deliver presidential messages has been a common strategy in dissipating allegations and rumours such as the above. Paul Sharp notes the positive roles diplomats play in averting most political conflicts in the international system.

However, ordinary people continued to enjoy their cross-border *mbokh* ties as interstate relations continued to be unpredictable following the Kartong attack. The Gambian state's internal security concerns shaped its attitudes towards Senegal. However, international relations and regional concerns have also affected interstate relations. As shown in the next section below, The Gambia's policy towards its neighbours was different from Senegal's and this fact has also created numerous transport and /or mobility related tensions in interstate relations.

3.5.3: Senegal's Relations with Other Neighbouring Countries

Senegal and Guinea Bissau have had a long-standing animosity over their shared maritime border and they have clashed militarily over the border. Senegal had also had a violent confrontation with Mauritania over their joint border (see chapter 1, 6 & 7). Its frosty relations with Guinea Bissau and Mauritania affected its relations with The Gambia.

Given the close social ties between The Gambia-Senegal, Senegal expected The Gambia to be its ally during these conflicts. But The Gambia opted to be a neutral party and a mediator in these conflicts. Annoyed by The Gambia's decision, Senegal was uncompromising. It adopted measures against these countries, which also directly hurt The Gambia. For example, during its conflict with Guinea Bissau, the humanitarian relief agency Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) alleged that the Senegalese government closed its border with The Gambia, to prevent the transit of humanitarian relief heading to Guinea Bissau. This was supposed to be a "punitive" measure against Bissau, but it directly harmed The Gambia's re-export trade to Bissau. The Senegalese government issued a press release denying MSF's allegations. However, the feeling that Senegal's acts intended to cause harm to The Gambia, was not consoled. Shortly after this incident, it refused transit to re-export goods heading to Bissau from The Gambia. The Gambian state saw the transport blockade on the goods as both a direct and

See Paul Sharp, *Diplomatic Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

indirect pay back measure from Senegal. It became part of the catalogue of the country's "unneighbourly" acts against The Gambia.

Senegal's policies towards its neighbours came from concerns to protect its various interests during their conflicts. The Gambia's policies were also designed to protect its interests with one of its major trading partners-Guinea Bissau. Both countries acted in ways that were distasteful to the other country. But irrespective of whether their respective state logics were self-interested or not, The Gambia -Senegal relationship was also vulnerable to internal political conditions in the other country, as seen in the next section.

3.5.4: Political Transition in Senegal and Interstate Relations

The border incident with Guinea Bissau and the Kartong attack happened at a time when there was political transition in Senegal. In March 2000, Abdou Diouf and his Parti Socialiste (PS) lost elections to Abdoulaye Wade's Parti Démocratique Sénégalais (PDS). Like his predecessors, Senghor and Diouf, Wade's first official visit was to The Gambia, sealing the visit as a must do "ritual" for any new Senegalese president.²⁴⁷ Apart from their geopolitical merits, these visits were held to reaffirm *mbokh* and *dome-ndeye* ties between the two countries and were occasions for the renewal of one-Senegambia brotherhood and solidarity rhetoric. Given the new political changes in both countries, the year 2000 was significant for interstate politics. Cross-border and interstate transport difficulties that started as domestic transport problems at Barra spread to cross-border routes. Protests became constant. The political economy of the border was affected as transporters in Senegal adopted new measures against the Wade government, and by extension, against the Jammeh government in Banjul. Local transport problems in The Gambia shaped the new measures Senegalese transporters adopted. This further shows how the two countries have an interconnected economy as exemplified in the next sections, which

²⁴⁷"President Wade, Senegal, makes stop-over visit at Banjul airport, stresses need for regional peace," *Daily Observer*, May 2, 2000.

deal with how transport crisis in The Gambia became a cross-border and interstate transport crisis in Senegambia.

3.6: Internal Gambian Politics and Cross-Border Transport Practices

Protests and anger over cross-border transport have their antecedents in the Gambian transport market. From June to October 1997, commercial passenger transporters and taxi drivers went on strike in The Gambia. The drivers, who were mainly Senegalese citizens, opposed new traffic laws designed to regulate a growingly dysfunctional urban transport sector.²⁴⁸ Internal divisions in the local transport market showed when, Daddy Sowe, a senior retired driver and president of The Gambia Transport Union, publicly condemned the strike action.²⁴⁹ In June, the government took 35 striking drivers to court, accused of illegal action.²⁵⁰ More protests followed: in August 30 commercial drivers in Serekunda's popular and high traffic zone Bartese protested against the new regulations.²⁵¹ They too were dragged to court for illegal action. With this crisis, Serekunda became a major focal point for interstate transport disputes. This budding crisis became a fully-fledged conflict. It spread to Barra, the Trans-Gambia routes and the ferries. In the next section, we explore the cross-border and interstate ramifications of the Serrekunda transport crisis. It serves as another good example of how state logics contributed to dome-*baaye* oriented attitudes in interstate relations as both sides ignored, if temporary, cultural ethics for cooperative relations.

²⁴⁸"Commercial and taxi drivers on strike against proposed new traffic laws," *Daily Observer Newspaper*, June 17 1997.

²⁴⁹"Daddy Sowe condemns drivers action," *Daily Observer*, June 18, 1997.

²⁵⁰"35 in court following drivers' strike," *Daily Observer*, June 20, 1997.

²⁵¹"30 striking drivers at Bartese charged on two counts," *Daily Observer*, August 8, 1997.

3.6.1: Serekunda Transport Crisis

Serekunda is the most populous town in The Gambia. It is also a major growth center with central routes to Banjul and other areas of Kombo, The Gambia's major urban region. Serekunda's population has more than tripled since the 1970s, when many people from the sub-region migrated to The Gambia and settled in the city. Serekunda's strategic location was also socially attractive for many migrants. It enabled individuals to adopt "dual-residential strategies" which made it possible and easy for many migrants in The Gambia "to maintain close touch with family members left behind through visitation and remittances."²⁵² Migrant transporters and their families many of whom lived in Serekunda constantly moved back and forth across the border. Cross-border trade grew, as Serekunda became a major trading hub like Banjul. The demand for transport services there and the Greater Banjul area increased. Consequently, throughout the week, traffic around Serekunda jammed especially between 7am and 10am, 5pm and 7pm and Sundays, from 4pm and 9pm. Serekunda's central location has made it a transit space for passengers from other areas of the Kombos, heading to Banjul, the Greater Banjul area and Kombo Saint Mary's. These added to Serekunda's oversized passenger traffic, intensifying peak hour transport shortages.

Serekunda's weekly passenger traffic included commuter employees (including government employees), students, and other people on other businesses or needing to catch up with time-sensitive appointments. Its traffic was also busy on weekends as people returned home from weekend visits.

The shortage of peak hour transport services caused mini-stampedes as individuals rushed in frenzy to get into cars. Due to the perpetual traffic jam on the city's routes, individuals avoided the traffic-clogged roads leading

²⁵²Aderanti, Adepoju, "Migration and social policy in Sub-Saharan Africa"(paper for International Organisation for migration, Institute for Futures Studies, February, 2008), 8.

to the usually overcrowded Serekunda motor park, which was the official start and end points of passenger vehicles in Serekunda. Instead, passengers waited at Bartese, a narrow strip of road located at the edge of the Serekunda main market, along the major highway that ran from Banjul into Serekunda. This practice gave rise to what was called “in service” as passengers met vehicles half way at Bartese. Drivers picked passengers up from pedestrian sidewalks, unmindful of the unsafe vehicle–passenger peak hour interactions. Thus, transporters short-circuited the traffic by avoiding the main motor park as they loaded and offloaded passengers around Bartese. From Bartese, they managed to wobble out of the congested traffic to head back on the highway to Banjul or to other destinations.

On a regular scale of Serekunda traffic, driving from Bartese to the motor park took about ten minutes, at most. However, during dense traffic, this took at least twenty minutes with cars crawling behind each other in a snail-paced traffic. It was faster to drive to Banjul from Serekunda during low peak traffic, than to get to the Serekunda motor park from Bartese during high peak traffic. The distance between Banjul and Serekunda is about 13.8 kilometers via the Banjul-Serekunda highway, whereas the distance between Bartese and Serekunda motor park is about a kilometer.

Bartese saved passengers and drivers the time-wasting delays of Serekunda peak hour traffic. The Gambia government traffic control department or traffic police initially ignored practices of “stealing the road” at Bartese - the local term for such unauthorised acts by transporters. These practices flourished and became the new rule for traffic in Serekunda. Bartese became a popular spot for both high and low peak Serekunda traffic. Taxis for hire also clustered around there, worsening the troubling traffic scenario.

Bartese frustrated planned traffic flows in Serekunda. But it was an economic boon for transporters. Short-circuiting the end and start points of their journeys meant transporters used less fuel, which decreased their per

trip operation cost. It reduced the amount of time spent in traffic for standard journeys from Banjul- Serekunda while increasing their per trip earnings.

But for commuters, it was a costly practice. Transporters circumvented traffic laws and charged unauthorised extra fares to passengers wishing to be taken to the motor park from Bartese. Most passengers obliged, though not without complaining about how drivers were financially exploiting them. Not designed for the traffic imposed on it, Bartese traffic caused lot of trouble to the public and Gambian traffic control agents took initiative to sort it out. They tried to redirect traffic from there but this attempt directly conflicted with the operational logics of transporters and people's logic of securing their transport needs. The new policy the Gambian state tried to implement to re-organise traffic in Bartese created a political storm locally and across the border. The next section further discourses how experiences of the traffic at Bartese highlighted how the social and political spheres co-extended into each other. It also showed how the deep politics of society was invariably linked to the high politics of state, in Senegambia.

3.6.2: Bartese Traffic Troubles and the Outcomes of Regulation

For many years and irrespective of its imperfections, Bartese facilitated commuter access to public transport. It helped individuals to optimally negotiate transport supply constraints. But over time, traffic around Bartese grew more complex, disorderly and dysfunctional, creating an unavoidable need for authorities to regulate it. A new traffic regulation redirected all commercial transport in Serekunda to the main motor park. It banned traffic from converging at Bartese, to the dismay of drivers and commuters. Worried about congestion and the deteriorated facilities at Serekunda motor park, drivers mobilised against the regulation, triggering the 1997 Serekunda transport crisis in The Gambia.²⁵³ The new regulation protected passenger rights to be taken to the motor park without any extra charges imposed by

²⁵³“Drivers complain of regulations and facilities at Serekunda car park,” *Daily Observer*, September 17, 1997.

drivers.²⁵⁴ But both passengers and transporters were angry about the new regulation. The dismay the public expressed about this new regulation meant the public supported transporters against government and this gave transporters power to challenge government on the new regulation.

3.6:3. Local Echoes with Cross-Border Expressions over Transport

When traffic at Bartese was re-directed to the Serekunda motor park, there was a public outcry against the move. This drew the country's attention to both local and cross-border transport crisis. The Gambian National Assembly debated on the problems with ferry services on The Gambia River, raising public awareness on inadequate ferry services, too.²⁵⁵ This further encouraged and conditioned cross-border transporters to mobilise against dissatisfactions on the cross-border routes. What started as a local transport crisis transformed into a cross-border one. By 2000, Barra as the centre of cross-border traffic flows from Banjul to Dakar became a hot spot for an emerging transport crisis. From Barra, cross-border transporters mobilised for future activism about the interstate routes. It also set the tone for future interstate dialogue over transport as both Banjul and Dakar were caught up in the transport crisis.

3.7. Barra Transport Crisis, 2000: Fighting Gambia Government "Over Taxation"

The Banjul and Serekunda transport crisis were antecedents of Barra and the other cross-border transport crises that beset The Gambia-Senegal interstate relations.²⁵⁶ The Barra crisis started in August 2000, when Senegalese transporters operating both domestic and cross-border transport

²⁵⁴"Public outcry over traffic regulations imposed in Serekunda," *Daily Observer*, September 25, 1997.

²⁵⁵"MPs express fear over Banjul- Barra ferry system," *Daily Observer*, March 24, 1998.

²⁵⁶See Sven Steinmo *et al.*, *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 4-6. See also William Richard Scott, *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities* (London: Sage Publications, 2014).

services, including taxis, went on a sit-down strike. They claimed that they were being over-taxed by Gambian authorities. Cross-border transport was completely paralysed with hundreds and hundreds of people stranded in Barra.²⁵⁷ Frustrated passenger mobs attacked a Gambian Public Transport Corporation (GPTC) bus at the company's interstate bus terminal in Barra, close by the motor park. GPTC suspended its Banjul-Dakar bus services as the strike raged on.²⁵⁸ Transporters later blocked GPTC interstate bus services to Senegal.

The Barra strike was distinctive. Gambian authorities capitulated and gave in to the demands of the striking drivers as Banjul City Council has done during the 1997 transporter protest in Banjul. This marked the first victory Senegalese transporters gained against Gambian authorities. It was also the beginning of formal aggression against Gambian interstate buses. A Gambia government and a GPTC delegation traveled to Dakar to negotiate with officials of the Senegalese Transport Association, for transporters to end their strike and to remove the blockade against the GPTC buses. Transporters claimed that they were protesting over their dissatisfactions with road user and ferry crossing fees. They also claimed that they were against government plans to increase ferry crossing fees. These dissatisfactions became the cornerstone of transporter "policies" against The Gambia. They also became the centre of transporter advocacy for improved conditions on the cross-border routes.

The effects peer influence had on the transport sector were evident after the Barra crisis. In April 2001, rural Kombo drivers unilaterally increased fare prices for local shared taxis in Brikama. Commuters boycotted taxis and walked to their destinations. The Kombo Central transport crisis was born. Eventually, local authorities negotiated between drivers and passengers to resolve the crisis as low and high level politics

²⁵⁷"Hundreds stranded at Barra due to alleged sit-down strike by Senegalese taxi drivers," *Daily Observer*, August 24, 2000.

²⁵⁸"GPTC suspends Banjul-Dakar services following mob attack on bus," *Daily Observer*, August 25, 2000.

struggled against each other.²⁵⁹ But the impacts of the Barra crisis continued to unfold as interstate relations faced new challenges, which are discussed below.

3.7.1: Barra Transport Crisis and Interstate Relations

Even before the dust settled down on the Barra transport crisis in 2000, newly elected president Abdoulaye Wade rejected The Gambia's ongoing mediation in the Casamance conflict. He argued that Senegal could resolve its own internal conflict, and no external mediators were needed. Wade's decision was one glaring example of how state logics could take precedence over Senegambia's one-ness discourse and kinship rhetoric. The Gambia has a bona fide stake in the Casamance conflict. People in the country have family ties to Casamance. The country's border villages have suffered from hit and run attacks from Casamance rebels. Casamance has been an important trading partner, too (see Chapter 1 and 2). Given these realities, Wade's stance on The Gambia's mediation in Casamance indirectly refuted the purported *dome-ndeye* ties between the two countries. It symbolically inferred that the fabric of interstate relations was to be redesigned for the two sides to exist separately (see chapter 1). It reaffirmed the two countries were different. This was a temporary boycott of the Senegambia integration agenda.

The Gambia withdrew from the Casamance peace talks in October, 2000. By December, the transport crisis was resolved. In a U-turn, shortly before this, Wade re-invited The Gambia to mediate in Casamance, re-igniting once again intergovernmental collaboration.²⁶⁰ The turn of events and the lessons of these incidences reveal that transport issues can affect interstate relations. Kinship discourses are volatile and there are limits to the practice of employing cultural resources to appease interstate relations.

²⁵⁹"Rural Kombo drivers strike over Commuter rejection of fare increase D3- D4," *Daily Observer*, April 11, 2001.

²⁶⁰"Gambia re-invited to Casamance talks by Senegalese government," *Daily Observer*, December 15, 2000.

In Senegambian social practices, both family members and neighbours are allowed to initiate reconciliation in family, interpersonal or social disputes in the community. The neighbour, especially the long-time neighbour, is considered a member of the family. By rejecting The Gambia's mediation effort, Wade froze those family and neighbourly privileges that gave The Gambia legitimacy to participate in the Casamance peace talks. Wade's statements and actions also implied The Gambia was an unwelcomed stranger in the Casamance peace talks.

However, after Wade declined The Gambia's mediation efforts, the behind the scenes interstate negotiations continued to use kinship rhetoric as they tried to solve the political misunderstanding that ensued. It was no surprise then that after the two countries reached a deal, President Jammeh was re-invited by President Wade to continue the mediation.

The greater lessons these political maneuvers show is that state logics influence political relations in Senegambia. But grassroots efforts and low politics can shape negotiations over those state logics. Therefore, kinship was a political tool that can be used expediently when the situation calls for it. There was a creative appropriation of notions of a shared culture and relatedness, which transformed the political crisis. But even with this development, the Barra transport crisis continued to shape interstate relations. The next section therefore reflects on how it did that.

3.7.2: Significance of Barra Transport Crisis for Cross-Border Transporters

The Barra strikes represented the beginning of complex interstate political difficulties around transport. As already discussed, transport plays a significant role in society and as such tensions around it can have serious socio-economic implications. Conley and McLaren observed that the social advantages automobile transport enjoy have become a curse to society because the use of mass-motorization produces social, economic,

environmental, health and institutional externalities for society.²⁶¹ Uplifting the curse of the interstate transport sector meant supporting the state's ideals for welfare-based transport pricing. It also meant ensuring that transporters achieve their aim to have lower tax liabilities and greater returns on their operations. Creating a balance between these two goals required *dome-ndeye* cooperative attitudes as well as *dome-baaye* adversarial tendencies. Ensuring a middle ground between the two positions reechoed the fabric image. It implied cross-border social and economic systems and political life are interdependent on each other. But politicians and transporters adopted different approaches to pursuing their goals relating to cross-border transport and interstate relations. This posed a risk and escalated interstate transport conflicts. On the other hand, it also offered opportunities for the two sides to sit down and revisit their misunderstandings. As a whole, the 2000 Barra crisis gave rise to a new phase in transporter-state relations. It authored a whole new agenda for the Senegalese Transport Association and this agenda shaped interstate relations from 2000 to 2015 (see chapter 4 and 5).

3.8: Conclusion

This chapter explored how values of a shared culture created institutional harmony in cross-border transport and interstate relations. Transporters' practices and the practices of other people engaged in the sector helped make cross-border transport a lucrative, stable enterprise. The Gambia-Senegal cooperation to build roads and their support to establish automobile transport infrastructure promoted the Senegambian unification agenda. The two states connected cross-border communities and the roads built were symbolic of social ties and kinship sentiments. And thus, the two countries relied on both state logics and cultural resources to establish a transport sector that worked for both sides of the border.

²⁶¹ Jim Conley, and Arienne Tigar McLaren, eds., *Car Troubles: Critical Studies of Automobility and Auto-Mobility* (London: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2009), 3.

But interstate cooperation has had different phases and different outcomes. Divergent interests promoted interstate conflicts. Social and political pressures contributed to The Gambia's domestic transport crisis. The crisis spread to the border and this showed that the economic, social and political spheres are interconnected.

As people become more and more insecure about economic conditions, they adjusted their attachment to kinship ideas and values for social relations. Similarly, when state logics were at stake, the state also adopted other behaviour modes to protect its interests. Transactional practices affected the resilience of social ones, leading to a rapid switching between *dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye* behaviour modes.

Creativity and contingency have been important in defining and redefining interstate politics, transporter-state and state-society relations in Senegambia. The two states creatively responded to new political conditions, brandishing kinship rhetoric when appropriate or ignoring it as unfolding circumstances dictated. Transporters also showed the same level of creativity as they formed alliances and counter-alliances to foster their economic interests. Even society itself dynamically pursued its interests and willingly compromised to foster those interests. The mix-match of strategies and attitudes exemplify that cultural resources can be used towards various ends and their effectiveness depends on what was at stake and who was using them for what goals. Whatever the case, the fact remains that kinship is something state agents and citizens can both fall on, in response to different dynamics of production, social and political life. The social order is not static and so are attitudes and practices. This chapter leads us to chapter 4, which highlights how cultural norms of cooperative behavior receded in transporter-transporter and transporter-state relations, creating major tensions in The Gambia-Senegal interstate relations.

CHAPTER 4

POLITICS AND THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE COMMON TRANSPORT NETWORK, 2000 - 2015

“To say that we have mutual ownership of something does not mean we have equal rights
to it.”
(Mandinka Proverb).

“What belongs to the monkey must be kept close to its cheeks.”
(Wolof Proverb).

4.0: Changes in Cross- Border Transport

Following the Serekunda and Barra transport crisis, and by the year 2000, multiple forms of tensions existed in cross-border transport in Senegambia (see chapter 3). Both external factors (e.g. developments in Senegal's national politics) and internal factors (e.g. developments in the Senegalese Transport Association) affected the sector. In 2000, President Abdoulaye Wade was elected president of Senegal. His election victory marked the first time in Senegalese history when the ruling party which led the country to independence in 1960, lost elections to the opposition (see chapter 3). In the same year, Wade's long-time confidante Alassane Ndoeye was elected as the president of the Senegalese Transport Association. These developments created new dynamics in transport-state, transporter-transporter and transporter-society relations as both Wade and Ndoeye pursued a new political agenda to disintegrate the interstate transport network. The disintegration agenda subtly challenged the notion that a powerful bond that transcends vested interests unifies Gambians and Senegalese (see chapters 1, 2 and 7). It exemplified that Senegambian kinship theories can serve political expediency. They can be appropriated in different contexts to

advance or stall different agendas or goals. Thus, this chapter explores the question: How did cross-border transport change from a sector of cooperation to a sector characterised by conflict, which led to the disintegration of the common transport network?

The first part of the chapter identifies interests in cross-border transport and highlights how conflicts in the sector emanated from these interests. An overview of cross-border transport conflicts follows. This section shows the linkages between domestic and interstate politics and the interface between the “deep politics of society” and the “high politics of the state.”²⁶² The section also discusses wider societal values for cross-border cooperation. This is followed by a discussion of the strategies the Senegalese Transport Association employed to disintegrate and restructure the common transport network. After this, the chapter identifies the outcomes of the restructured cross-border transport sector. It also discusses how transporters have used the border, the ferry problem, practices on the road and the benefits associated with the joint transport network, to achieve their goals. It also discusses transporter-state (Gambian) conflicts and responses and counter-responses to the conflicts. Further, it identifies controversies in interstate dialogue over the border and cross-border transport. This is followed by an analysis of how ferry privatisation intensified the cross-border transport crisis, fueling transporter-state tensions and undermining interstate solidarity. Next, the chapter discusses how bad ferries helped to entrench militant behaviour from transporters and widespread calls for the Trans-Gambia to be bridged. The conclusion of the chapter follows and this connects to chapter 5 where the outcomes of the disintegrated common transport network are further examined.

²⁶² John Lonsdale, “Political accountability in African history,” in Patrick Chabal, ed., *Political Domination in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 126- 157

4.1: Interests in Cross-Border Transport

State and non-state actors operate at multiple levels in Senegambia's cross-border transport sector. As such, the multiple interests in the sector overlap. This situation creates both productive and non-productive tension for the border and its political economy. However, the way the different interests in the sector interconnect also creates opportunities for negotiations in the sector. Both state and non-state actors employ creativity and contingency in pursuing their interests in the transport sector.

Usually, the state provides transport infrastructure, other public goods and it is responsible for protecting public welfare. Based on these expected roles of the state, The Gambia and Senegal have a common goal for the transport sector. One such shared goal is the desire to exercise control over the sector. Their strategies for attaining these goals may not be effective. Historically, both states have failed to provide adequate transport services to their citizens.²⁶³ This partly explains why private actors dominate both domestic and cross-border transport in both countries. These actors, even if they are held to the ideals of "social responsibility," aim to maximise the returns on their investments. They may not always share the state's welfare concerns. Hence, in most societies, motorists have been critical of the state's transport policies such as road user fees and taxes, the regulation of road practices, requirements for insurance, driving licenses and other control mechanisms imposed to regulate the automobile sector.²⁶⁴

Irrespective of the differences in their objectives and goals, the state and commercial transporters share an interest in having functioning transport infrastructure and services. The former needs roads and motor vehicles to enforce its will, secure its jurisdiction and to order the different universes of power within it. Transport infrastructure also helps the state to

²⁶³ Paul Amos, "Roles of Government in Transport" (paper presented at the Transport Forum, World Bank, Washington DC, March 2005).

²⁶⁴ William Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics in Britain* (Suffolk: Penguin Books, 1971). Theo Barker and Dorian Gerhold, *The Rise and Rise of Road Transport, 1700- 1990* (Hampshire, London: The Macmillan Press, 1993); James A. Dunn Jr., *Driving Forces, The Automobile, Its Enemies and the Politics of Mobility* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1998).

enforce its extractive policies within its jurisdiction.²⁶⁵ Similarly, commercial transporters need transport infrastructure to achieve their entrepreneurial goals. Better roads reduce their operation cost, the wear and tear of their vehicles, time spent on the roads, fuel consumption and helps to increase their income or the returns on their investments.

The fact that these two entities have some shared objectives implies they can cooperate in areas of mutual interest. However, the existence of different interests also means they can have rivalries between them. The clash of interests has made automobile transport a constant source of political and economic tension, especially during economic distress.²⁶⁶ Economic conditions, technology and politics largely dictate developments in the transport sector and other societal systems.²⁶⁷ Hence, unstable economic conditions have contributed to why transporter- state, transporter- transporter and transporter- society relations have been mixed and unpredictable in Senegambia. Fierce competition among transporters and expansion of the fleet size and in the number of operators in the cross-border traffic contributed to the dwindling of *wullere* and *dome-ndeye* ethics in the sector (see chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5).²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ Literature on how the colonial state used road construction and transport infrastructure to entrench itself in the colonial territory is relevant to how important transport and transport infrastructure are for the post-colonial African state. See Jan- Bart Gewald *et al.*, ed. *The Speed of Change, Motor Vehicles and People in Africa, 1890-2000* (Boston, Leiden: Brill, 2009); Philip J. Havik, "Motor Cars and Modernity: Pining for Progress in Portuguese Guinea, 1915- 1945," in *The Speed of Change Motor Vehicles and People in Africa, 1890-2000*, ed. Gewald J. *et al.* (Boston, Leiden: Brill, 2009); Debie, Janet Debie, "From Colonization to National Territories in Continental West Africa: the Historical Geography of a Transport Infrastructure Network," *Journal of Transport Geography* 18 (2010).

²⁶⁶ Bjorn Hasselgren, "Government's Roles for Transport Infrastructure, Theoretical Approaches and Historical Development" (PhD diss., KTH Royal Institute of Technology, 2013).

²⁶⁷ On anti-competition and monopoly tendencies of transporters, see Keith Bradley and Aaron Nejad, *Managing Owners, The National Freight Consortium in perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 25- 35.

²⁶⁸ Douglass C. North. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 34. This borrows from North's idea of the effects institutions have on transaction cost and how exchange can be categorised to include personal exchange with enforcement and impersonal exchange without enforcement.

The low adherence to deep-rooted social and religious values in the transport sector is also conditioned by the fact that scarcity of resources can cause unity to decline among social groups. Renner has also observed that in Senegambian history “social breaches could be healed, but crisis over land and livelihood proved far less manageable.”²⁶⁹ Thus, economic hardship has had its toll on the cross-border transport sector, leading to rivalries, jealousies and *dome-baaye* behavioural practices (see chapters 1, 2 and 5).

Conflicts in the transport sector expand into interstate political tensions. If the politicians fail to see eye to eye and use the border as barrier when expedient, transporters and other local actors at the border have been also well instructed in this game. This validates Nugent’s observation that local actors tend to exploit circumstances around the border to their own advantage.²⁷⁰ But cross-border transport conflicts showed that individuals and the state exploit the border in multiple ways. This process is constantly shifting based on the different logics that guide such a process at any given time. It contributes to continuities and discontinuities in cross-border and interstate relations, as evident in the next section, which is about conflicts around transport.²⁷¹

4.2: Senegambia Transport Conflicts: An Overview

Dissatisfactions with domestic and cross-border transport are connected (see chapter 3). This indicates The Gambia-Senegal transport conflicts are complex. However, interstate transport conflicts have two dimensions. The first dimension manifests as a conflict between the state and private entrepreneurs. This conflict has three dimensions: first, it unfolds as tensions

²⁶⁹F. A. Renner, “Ethnic Affinity, Partition and Political Integration in Senegambia,” in *Partitioned Africans Ethnic Relations across Africa’s International Boundaries 1884-1984*, ed. Asiwaju, A.I (London, Lagos: C. Hurst and Company and University of Lagos Press, 198), 74.

²⁷⁰Paul Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens at the Ghana-Togo Frontier: The Lies of the Borderlands Since 1914* (Ohio: James Currey Press, 2002).

²⁷¹Andre de Palma *et al*, *A handbook of Transport Economics* (Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2011), 2.

between Senegalese transporters and Gambian authorities. Secondly, as tension between Senegalese transporters and their own government and thirdly, it includes tension between Jakarta riders and Gambian communities located at the border. Gambian authorities are also drawn into this conflict through their interventions to protect their border communities from the menace of the Jakarta (see chapter 5). Together, these three aspects of tensions crystallised to shape The Gambia-Senegal interstate tensions.

The second dimension of interstate transport conflicts can also be differentiated based on the actors that are involved in the conflict. The first aspect of this second conflict transpires as intermodal conflicts and involves rivalries between Senegalese automobile transport and Jakarta motorcycles. Each of them claims to be the bonafide border transport. Private entrepreneurs are also caught up in this intermodal conflict. This conflict also includes subtle rivalries between cross-border automobile transporters. But this has a twist to it. Superficially, it can be described as conflict between Senegalese transporters and Gambian authorities. However, according to Senegalese Transporters' advocacy, the Gambian transporters who are caught up in the middle of this conflict are un-intended victims. Senegalese transporters always deny that their anti-Gambia government policies are designed to hurt Gambian transporters, their *dome-ndeyes* (see chapter 5). But there is some caveat to their advocacy: they deny waging a war against Gambian transporters. But they've expressed dissatisfactions about the fact that Gambian cross-border transports have a greater carrying capacity than Senegalese ones. As such, Senegalese grievances against Gambian cars can be considered as part of the intermodal tensions.

Irrespective of the identities of the parties to each type of conflict or tension, The Gambia-Senegal transport conflicts mainly arise from the effects of the colonial partition that fragmented Senegambia's geography. Thus, Senegambia's cross-border transport struggles validate White and Senior's observation that transport systems are "...not entirely free from

historical legacy.”²⁷² The colonial legacy and geography shaped continuities in interstate transport challenges from independence to the present day. The colonial legacy has also locked The Gambia and Senegal in a “territorial trap.” The two countries share the same economic space and have rival national policies. Their national logics shape their responses to the border, transport and other related issues.²⁷³ This partly explains why interstate conflicts especially over the border and the common transport links have recurred from independence to 2015. As such, interstate conflict in Senegambia is connected to how each of the two countries tries to safeguard its national interests amidst the complexities of the border. The next section explores how domestic and interstate developments shape interstate tensions and cross-border transport crisis in Senegambia.

4.3: Change, Tension and the Disintegration of the Common Transport Links

When Alassane Ndoeye, President Wade’s long-time political ally, was elected president of the Senegalese Workers and Transport Union in 2000, there was national economic distress in Senegal. Transporters complained of a rising tax burden on them. They were also dissatisfied with the intense competition in domestic and cross-border transport sectors. They also claimed that both The Gambian and Senegalese states were exploiting them and the transport sector needed reforms.

President Wade supported Ndoeye on the Transport Association’s reform agenda, which sought to change the institutional arrangements on the interstate routes, shared motor park facilities, and practices along the cross-border roads and at the ferry crossings (see chapter 3 and 5). The alliance with President Wade shifted the attention of the Association from dissatisfactions with its own state to their discontentment with the Gambian state.

²⁷² HP White and ML Senior, *Transport Geography* (London, New York: Longman, 1983), 11.

²⁷³ John Agnew, “The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory,” *Review of International Political Economy* 01 (Spring 1994): 53- 80.

Based on transporter agenda-setting in 2000, the Senegalese Transport Association mobilised its members to collectively oppose Gambia government policies on the interstate routes and ferries. They argued that non-tariff barriers that hinder cross-border transport flows existed on the interstate routes. The West African economic bloc, ECOWAS, had long identified that non-tariff barriers that exist in West African transport systems have hindered sub-regional transport, trade and capital or labour mobility in West Africa. ECOWAS' policy observations strengthened Senegalese transporters resolve to challenge Gambian authorities.

Transporters argued that between 2000- 2002, they encountered eleven checkpoints between Keur Ayib and Senoba, two points on the interstate routes. They also complained about informal road arrangements by which transporters allegedly bribed Gambian traffic police on the interstate routes 500 CFA francs or more.²⁷⁴ Their allegations focused on the Gambian side of the border, but corrupt practices on the interstate roads existed across both sides of the border and Transporters themselves contributed to entrenching such corrupt practices. Their one-sided claims bore the hallmark of *dome-baaye* behavioural tendencies as they faulted Gambian authorities and Gambian routes, while ignoring the overall problems on the interstate routes. This approach was politically expedient. It guaranteed them the Wade government's support. Moreover, faulting Gambian authorities was a good way of attracting sympathy from other stakeholders with vested interests in cross-border transport. Consequently, the Association also whipped the sympathy of Senegalese citizens and other stakeholders before it formerly launched its fight against the Gambian state over cross-border transport arrangements.²⁷⁵

Unconvinced by the Senegalese Transporter's agenda, Gambian transporters refused to join the former's fight against their state. This disagreement pitted the two groups of transporters against each other. The struggle against Gambian authorities became a struggle between "us"

²⁷⁴Interview with Bachirou Ndiaye, Dakar, Senegal, 16th May, 2013.

²⁷⁵*Ibid.*

(Senegalese transporters) and “them” (Gambian state and transporters). The cooperative relations that defined interactions between the two groups of transporters turned into open rivalries. *Wullere* and *dome-ndeye* considerations receded as both groups aimed to protect their economic interests across both sides of the border.²⁷⁶ This process hurt interpersonal relations among transporters and between Senegalese transporters and Gambian authorities.

The Association’s attempt to secure exclusive gains for its members over their cross-border Gambian colleagues reechoed Renner’s observation that in Senegambia, social breaches were easily healed but struggles over resources were difficult to tackle.²⁷⁷ This meant the economic concerns of transporters and the political pressures these concerns created in cross-border and interstate relations redefined cross-border bonds and relations, even if temporarily.²⁷⁸ As this conflict unfolded, it was clear that the close-knit social bonds between Gambians and Senegalese are susceptible to economic competition. The tensions were an opportunity for both groups of transporters to adopt impersonal considerations.²⁷⁹ The Senegalese Transport Association swiftly moved forward to organise its first nation-wide protest against Gambian authorities at The Gambia-Senegal border. The next section explores how the association mobilised and launched its anti-Gambian Authorities protests at the border, giving way to the disintegration of the common transport network.

²⁷⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷⁷Renner, “Ethnic Affinity...” 1985, 74.

²⁷⁸ Elizabeth, Frazer, *The Problems of Communitarian Politics, Unity and conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 2. *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁷⁹This resonates with Frazer’s observation that the notion of community is generally fluid among social groups

4.3.1: Mobilising Against Gambian Authorities, 2002

In March 2002, Alassane Ndoeye used his popular support to organise the Senegalese Transport Association's first nation-wide forum in Dakar. Members from all Regional Transport Associations attended the forum. The forum had the backing of President Wade, the Senegalese Ministry of Interior and the Armed Forces of the country. During the Dakar-forum, transporters compiled a host of grievances against The Gambian state and the interstate route to rally cross-border transporters for their planned joint protest against Gambian Authorities.²⁸⁰ But given that the ferry problems have become a source of major dissatisfaction to both the public and cross-border transporters, the Association concentrated on these issues in this initial phase of its campaign. Specifically, it queried that ferry services have been perennially bad and this has affected the smooth flow of traffic, crossing fees have been increasing, bribery was endemic in the ferry sector, among other things.

The ferries have been the heart of the cross-border transport network. They facilitated a unimodal transport system and the intermodal dependence between different modes of cross-border transport (see chapters 2 & 3). As such, the ferry issue was a concern to the general public in both The Gambia and Senegal and a good selling point to elicit support from the general public.

Bachirou Ndiaye, the assistant Secretary-General of the Senegalese Transport Association noted in an interview that the ferry issue was an overriding concern to them. "From 2000-2002, there was plenty commotion about the ferry crossing. To cross, small cars paid 35,000 CFA francs, lorries and trucks paid 80,000 to 90,000 CFA and baggage fees were not standardised. The ferry crossing people did what they liked."²⁸¹ Setting their dissatisfactions around ferries was strategic. In 2002, the ferries were

²⁸⁰Interview with Bachirou Ndiaye, Dakar, Senegal, 16th May, 2013.

²⁸¹*Ibid.*

operating reliably. To ensure that the public considers their queries legitimate, transporters concentrated on ferry crossing fees instead of ferry operations as the core of their campaign. According to Ndiaye, after hearing the many criticisms against Gambian authorities, the ferries and the routes,

Alassane replied that if they asked for a boycott of the borders, we will do it. This became a unanimous request. One morning, we drove in 15 cars on the road to *Gambie*. We took along rice, oil, other provisions and money. We went to Keur Ayib. Barbie Toure and his people lent us a huge compound for our lodgings, cooked lunch, breakfast and dinner for us. For twenty-two good days, we blockaded the border. For twenty-three days, no car crossed from Keur Ayib to Farrafenni and from Karang to Amdallai. The Gambia Government invited us for a dialogue. But we refused to enter their border. Eventually, they crossed to Keur Ayib. At 4.00pm, we had talks, with the following conditions put to them: first, the eleven checkpoints that the chauffeurs traversed must be removed, the *porte baggage* they randomly charged must end, and they must reduce ferry crossing fees. They agreed to the conditions. We signed a protocol of agreement and then we ended the blockade.²⁸²

Ndiaye's narrative showed how the Association's leadership aroused members to adopt a confrontational approach to settling their grievances. They understood that closing the border was one of the most effective ways to pull Gambian authorities to the negotiation table. But doing that effectively required solidarity from the Senegalese state and from the general public. The existing bad relation between Presidents Wade and Jammeh was in transporters' favour. As a non-state actor, the Association needed permission from Senegal to be able to close the border between the two countries. The bad bilateral ties at that moment and the good relationship and alliance between Wade and Ndiaye provided the political leverage and the authority the Association needed, to close the border.

The Association was also aware that even with the permission of the Senegalese government, closing the border was a sensitive issue and if it was not handled properly, it could attract public backlash. They initiated a media campaign to rally public support to their cause before they embarked on their project. They impressed upon the public that they were fighting the excesses all people suffer as a result of bad ferries, poor management and corrupt road practices. They expressed how closing the border was a last

²⁸² *Ibid.*

resort for them given the grave inconvenience this will cause to the public. They offered alternative route choices to the people who might need to cross the border for essential travels.

By making transporters' problems the problems of the public, it was easy for the campaign to attract public sympathy. They effectively used people's need for reliable ferry services, smooth cross-border travels and cheaper crossing fees, to their advantage.²⁸³ It was also easy to obtain support for all logistics that were needed for implementing their border closure project. With political support from the state and social support from the public, the Association could dictate to Gambian authorities the terms by which they would negotiate.

The Senegalese state showed deference to transporters and it let them do what a state normally does—closing the border. This collaboration between the state and transporters mimicked the fabric metaphor, since the actions of both entities were required to subdue the Gambian state. The implementation of the border closure campaign further exposed how the state and people can seek out and use different resources to pursue their goals.

The Senegalese government had an option to mediate the transporter-Gambian government tensions, but it chose an artful silence and withdrew from the limelight of this struggle. But it provided transporters an instructive behind the scene firepower for using the authority it loaned to them. This stance was also dictated by state logics.

Both The Gambia and Senegal are members of ECOWAS, the sub-regional body that guarantees the free movement of people and goods among West African states. As such, closing the border between The Gambia and Senegal infringed on ECOWAS protocols for free mobility

²⁸³Agenda-setting and agenda-building theories emphasise the role of the media in shaping public opinion and by extension in policy agenda-setting, shaping policy decisions. However, the transporters effectively mobilised based on informal oral exchanges around their everyday experiences of the cross-border routes. For agenda-setting see M. McCombs, "A Look at Agenda-Setting: Past, Present and Future," *Journalism Studies* 4, 6 (2005). Also for cognitive approaches to communication see Derek Hook et al., *The Social Psychology of Communication* (Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

among member states. It was therefore understandable why the Wade government swiftly disassociated itself from transporters border blockade. It argued that the border conflict was between Senegalese transporters and Gambian authorities and it had nothing to do with Senegal's relationship with The Gambia.

Gambian authorities were un-impressed with neither the Senegalese government's stance nor its excuses. But some observers of The Gambia-Senegal relations (some intellectuals, media personnel and ordinary citizens on both sides of the border) argued that Senegal's stance came out of its frustrations with Gambian authorities over Casamance and the Trans-Gambia bridge project. But some people decried the Senegalese stance and argued it was using transporters as a proxy to fight the Gambian state, instead of honestly engaging the latter on its concerns.

The border closure polarised people on both sides of the border. But it provided transporters the courage and support they needed to pursue pro-disintegration policies to restructure the joint transport network, to effectively curb competition from Gambian transporters. Emboldened by the success of the 2002 border blockade and the Barra protests (see chapter 3), the Association further exercised its newfound authority by suspending The Gambia Public Transport Corporation's (GPTC) inter-state (Banjul-Dakar) buses from Senegalese roads. This embargo on GPTC buses crippled a competitive and convenient interstate bus service. The blockade created huge inconveniences for many passengers but Ndiaye argued the measure was justified. He noted:

The Gambian public bus service was running twelve buses on the inter-state route from Barra to Dakar. This started before Wade came to power and continued until in 2009. We told Gambians that we would now reduce the number of buses from twelve to four buses. Initially, the buses stood at their main stop in Barra and within a few minutes they were full. Fares were 5,000 cinq mille francs for each passenger. 80 passengers made up the full load of each trip. Ticket collections on each trip amounted to about 400, 0000 CFA. Fuel consumption was about 100,000 CFAs for the return journey. It was a big business for them. Each day, each of the

buses made almost 1,000,000 CFA or at least 800,000 CFA. That was lot of money. We had to change that.²⁸⁴

Ndiaye's complaints about GPTC buses clearly show that economic logics also influenced transporters' move to disintegrate the common transport links and to fight the Gambian state. The economic benefits Gambian authorities accrued from GPTC interstate buses were a source of jealousy for Senegalese transporters. Instead of exploring alternative means of effectively competing with GPTC in the market, they sought to kill or cripple its business in typical *dome-baaye* style. This rivalry re-echoes the Senegalese state's attitude towards Gambian re-export trade. But unlike the transporters who sought to kill or cripple GPTC's interstate bus services, a viable source of income for the company, the Senegalese state tried to control Gambian re-export trade by futilely attempting to drag the country into a customs union before and during the Confederation.²⁸⁵ Transporters' stance against the GPTC was therefore an extension of Senegal's adversarial economic strategy against The Gambia.

Ndiaye's statements below further revealed that economic jealousy hugely shaped Senegal and transporters agitations against The Gambia. He asserted that:

Barra gained lot of benefit from our drivers. Our cars paid *maanda* to the President of the Gambia Transport Union and his team. The monies stayed in Gambia, no benefits came to Senegal. It benefitted their transport association and their country. We as Senegalese transporters also want to enjoy the benefits of *maandas*. We want the benefits from our drivers to end in Senegal, not cross the border. We also wanted to transform transport in our country. We decided that Gambians should stop at Amdallai. We will also stop at Karang. People will come off their cars and enter our territory. On our side too, people will come off our cars and enter Gambian territory using Gambian transports.²⁸⁶

The above statements were an open confession that protecting economic interests were the defining force behind transporters' anti-Gambia government campaign. The tensions over the border were therefore a

²⁸⁴Interview with Bachirou Ndiaye, Dakar, Senegal, 16th May 2013. *Maanda* means commission.

²⁸⁵ See Jeggan C. Senghor, *The Politics of Senegambian Integration, 1958- 1994* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2008); Fafa Edrissa M'bai, *A Senegambian Insight* (Surrey/ Banjul: Fafa E.M. M'bai and Unwin Brothers Ltd., 1992); Dawda K. Jawara, *Kairaba* (Banjul/London: Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, 2009).

²⁸⁶*Ibid.*

legitimate behind the scenes economic war against the Gambian state and its transporters. Ndiaye's statements re-echoes complaints from other Senegalese that their country suffers significant economic losses as a result of The Gambia's illicit free transit trade to Senegal (see chapter 2).²⁸⁷ These complaints about economic losses were fervent at the height of structural adjustment in the 1980s and during the Confederation. So, Senegal's economic rivalry towards The Gambia continues two decades after the Confederation collapsed.

The statements also draw a pattern in The Gambia–Senegal economic policy conflict. In fact, Pa Ibrahima Toure, a retired driver who lives in Keur Ayib, disclosed that Senegalese transporters' attempt to fight Gambian authorities over the cross-border routes was a response to domestic economic difficulties in Senegal. He argued that their Association's policy to no longer allow *auto "étrangère"* (foreign cars, referring to Gambian cars) to have unlimited route access in Senegal was valid because the *droits* (taxes or duties) Senegalese transporters paid in Senegal were higher than what Gambian transporters paid in their country. "Senegal has a bigger problem. There are no jobs in the country. As Transporters, we do not have anywhere to take our cars. Business is not working well. We cannot have another country bring its cars here when our drivers pay more than their drivers. The countries are different (*rewi bukung*)."²⁸⁸

Both Toure's and Ndiaye's views highlight how The Gambia becomes an economic pawn for economic hardship in Senegal. They also expose how interstate economic relations were hugely reactionary. In fact, Toure further argued that Senegalese transporters' attitudes towards The Gambia were also a reaction to Gambian authorities' attitudes. He noted that for a long time, they attempted to expand the access of Senegalese commercial transport cars in The Gambia. But the country kept arguing that, "Our country is small. We have capacity to allow a few cars run there. If we allow

²⁸⁷ Toure 1989 quoted in Chris L. Delgado and Sidi Jammeh, ed. *The Political Economy of Senegal Under Structural Adjustment* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991).

²⁸⁸ Interview with Pa Ibrahima Toure, Keur Ayib, Senegal, 13th February, 2013.

all Senegalese cars to come here, we would be over flooded with cars and that will not be good for us.”²⁸⁹ Evidently, The Gambia-Senegal economic struggles are connected to their geography and their shared economic space.

Although the arguments highlighted here indicate that Senegal reacts to Gambian economic processes but the situation has not been that simple. The Gambia’s economic policies were also designed to gain edge over Senegal’s. So, both countries continuously react to each other’s policies. Each country is also on a constant lookout for new cross-border economic opportunities it can exploit, even if this means foregoing existing bilateral agreements. For example, Toure reported that transporters initiated the disintegration of the common transport network, but the two governments endorsed it. They said, “OK, since you the transporters have come up with this policy, from now on, each side should stop at their border. As governments, we want and need peace between us. If this works for you and it can maintain cordiality, let’s do it.”²⁹⁰

The stance both countries took on transporters’ disintegration initiative was similar to the Senegalese stance on transporters’ border closure campaign. Instead of mediating the relationship to maintain a joint transport system, which was beneficial to populations in both countries, the two states opted to endorse transporters’ actions with the excuse that it would maintain peace between them. But this position ignored the fact that separation can cause misgivings and distrust as each party nurtures suspicion about the other. Moreover, disintegrating the transport network by no means ended the longstanding economic struggles between the two countries. What it did was to intensify that struggle, paving a way for each country to adopt some hardline stance towards the other, even on issues of mutual interest and benefit.

But for analytical purposes, the endorsement of the disintegration and the subsequent bad politics between the two states show how kinship has

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

both benefits and risks, as both *dome-ndeye* and *dome-baaye* attitudes shaped relations at this time. But it also shows that transport can be a serious source of tension in society. From the colonial times to date, interstate relations over it have been mostly uneasy. Examples from other areas of the world such as New York and its taxicab industry also highlight that transport, like trade, is an area of intense political concern for states in general.²⁹¹ But transporter-state and transporter-transporter relations in Senegambia indicate the high politics of state is not discreet from the deep politics of society. Both systems mutually influence each other. Consequently, the economic rivalry among transporters mirrors the economic jealousies between the two states. Concerns for cost, price and benefits shifted *dome-ndeye* relational principles. Values for *wullere* receded and *dome-baaye* behavioural tenets took over interstate relations and transporter-Gambia government relations. Symbolically, the struggle over transport and the border manifest the complex nature of interstate and state-society relations in Senegambia. However, border closures have both positive and negative outcomes. The next section therefore explores how the border closure affected interstate political relations.

4.3.2: Implications of the 2002 Border Closure

Transporters' ability to hijack the sovereign authority of the state reinforced beliefs that there was an alliance between transporters and the Senegalese government. Other events that happened after the 2002 border closure strengthened such beliefs. For instance, in 2003, Senegalese Prime Minister Idrissa Seck visited The Gambia. GPTC officials met him to complain about the embargo on their buses. They urged transporters to lift the ban, citing how the action contravened ECOWAS protocols on free movement of people and goods. Seck returned to Senegal and engaged the Association

²⁹¹Biju Mathew, *Taxi, Cabs and capitalism in New York City* (New York: Cornell University Press 2008), 70 -82.

on behalf of GPTC and finally, the embargo was lifted. GPTC interstate bus services resumed.²⁹²

Prime Minister Seck's visit came at a time when relations were in serious jeopardy. Before his visit, on 7th June, 2003, fans of the Gambian and Senegalese national football teams had violently clashed in Dakar at a match. Shortly after this incident, Senegalese authorities delayed the transit of Gambian groundnut seeds destined for Senegal, causing outrage among Gambian lawmakers.²⁹³ Seck's visit was therefore a political attempt to pacify the political ill-will between the two states. His visit was also both a *dome-ndeye* and a citizen's diplomatic overture to cool down the political heat between the two states. He appeased both sides in the short term, but suspicion hung over interstate relations. Transporters' attempt to proceed with the disintegration agenda confirmed to both sides that they were engaged in an intense *dome-baaye* struggle. Their plans to re-structure the joint transport network, as discussed in the next section, was a powerful statement to Gambian authorities that it was no longer business as usual. For transporters and their political allies, the game was about protecting their economic interests rather than cross-border social bonds. But this did not mean that they had abandoned cultural ideas about relatedness in Senegambia. Instead, as it would be seen in the rest of the sections and chapters that follow, kinship ideas are constantly reinvented and manipulated to sustain various relations in the midst of contradictory state and personal logics.

²⁹²Ousman Darboe, "GPTC resumes Banjul-Dakar route a year after suspension," *Daily Observer* July (n/a) 2003.

²⁹³ "Why are the Senegalese holding our seednuts?" *Daily Observer*, July 8, 2003.

4.4: Restructuring Cross-Border Transport, 2004

The Senegalese Transport Association embarked on restructuring cross-border transport without consulting its Gambian counterparts or Gambian authorities. It started a new motor parks project in 2004. The first of these motor parks was established in Karang, where a sub-drivers' association was founded under the leadership of Pap Dianko.

We pledged: from this day, Senegalese transport will no longer cross over to Barra. By moving the *gare routier* from Barra to Karang, we blocked Gambians and all the financial gains made from us through the joint motor parks. Our next concern was how to make the *gare routier dundu* (alive and successful). In return, The Gambia took a position that Senegalese *mini cars* could no longer go further to Barra. We too decided to block their buses. Given the friendly accord our two governments signed, we agreed that instead of six buses, we will now allow only four on the interstate route, with two leaving from Dakar and two from Banjul, respectively.²⁹⁴

Ndiaye's words communicate transporters' resolution to sustain their agenda. The Association's economic concerns ignored cross-border relatedness (see chapters 1 & 2). However, recognising the formal diplomatic accords the two countries signed indicate that they were prioritising political relations over social ones. Considering that the "friendly accord" was born out of Senegambian claims of one-ness, transporters indirectly acknowledged cross-border kinship bonds in their re-structuring plans. Economic concerns weakened the strength of kinship discourses, but economic concerns have never effectively erased cross-border social bonds. Therefore, interstate relations can fit different forms of kinship bonds, without denying social claims about cross-border relatedness. Transporters' restructuring process was rooted in both economic and social views, but economic concerns were paramount to them.

When the Karang motor park started functioning, the Barra-Dakar route became Karang-Dakar. Although this new route eliminated cross-border intermodal transit connections, however, it was aligned to longstanding cross-border points of contact and mobility. , In this new arrangement, passengers crossed the border on foot from Amdallai and Karang to change to the national transport of each country. This situation

²⁹⁴Interview with Bachirou Ndiaye, Dakar, Senegal, 16th May, 2013.

created a boom for intermediate transport such as *clandos* and horse/donkey carts which found work transferring passengers from the border checkpoints to the new motor park located about a kilometer away. Under the new arrangement, passengers from The Gambia took three cars to get to their cross-border destinations from Barra. Banjul-bound passengers from Dakar travelled in two cars and the ferry to get to Banjul. The restructuring was a pain for passengers but it created more economic opportunities for transporters on both sides of the border.

The restructuring was evidently a victory for Senegalese transporters, but it was a cost to their Gambian colleagues, irrespective of the new opportunities in the sector. Gambian cars made between 200,000 mille or 250,000 CFA francs for their Barra- Dakar return trips. However, “our new policies completely embargoed them and Senegalese transport now feeds itself. Without authorisation or a *laisser passer*, Gambian cars cannot come into Senegal.”²⁹⁵ The restructured transport sector made Gambian transporters lose the gains they were making from the interstate routes. Under the re-structured system, vehicles of each of the two states were required to obtain official permission from border enforcement agents, if they wished to cross the border into the other country. Ndiaye noted that “Gambians come to Senegal the way they liked and left the way they chose to but now we control that.”²⁹⁶ Like in any change situation, some people won and other people lost in this new arrangement. Blocking Gambian transports from Senegalese routes was a victory for Senegalese transporters. They enjoyed new financial rewards from the situation. But it shaped new forms of resentment from across the border and also internally. Domestic transporters vied against each other to monopolise the gains. The next section explores the internal rift the restructuring caused among Senegalese stakeholders.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

4.4.1: Initial Outcomes of the Restructuring

Senegalese transporters' plans gave them an effective monopoly on interstate routes located within their country. However, border communities vied against each other to host one of the new motor park facilities. Communities that had one, under the joint transport system, insisted on maintaining them. These rivalries were intense in Casamance. Seleti, Diouloulou and Kafountine struggled against each other as each of them claimed to be the appropriate site for a new motor park. Seleti finally won the contest and its new motor park serviced Zinguinchor, Kolda and over time, Diaobi at the Senegal-Guinea Conakry border.²⁹⁷

Even after communities finally compromised on the locations of the new motor parks, the Senegalese Transport Association needed more effort on their project. Traffic around the new motor parks was slow to adjust. The Association claimed this was due to Gambian conspiracy to kill the new motor parks. In reaction to that conspiracy theory, it launched an arbitrary border blockade at the Amdallai-Karang border in 2004, to force all traffic to use the new motor park facilities. This arbitrary border closure was successful in re-directing cross-border traffic to the new motor parks. But there was no legitimate reason for it. It thus added a new complication to interstate relations.

Interestingly, this arbitrary border closure implied that the Association was in full control of the authority they borrow from the Senegalese state. It was willing to use its loaned powers for both legitimate and dictatorial reasons. It was also clear that the association was fully aware of the weak bargaining authority Gambian authorities have, given the new circumstances. They effectively exploited that for many years to come until when the Gambian state finally re-asserted its authority and met transporters' bargaining firepower with equal firepower (see chapter 5 and 6).

²⁹⁷Interview with Mere Olu Fatou Sall, Seleti, Senegal, 27th February, 2013.

Furthermore, the arbitrary border closure signified that *dome-baaye* tendencies have taken over transporter-transporter and transporter-state relations. It showed deep-seated personal grievances, which were manifested with strong emotional undertones. *Dome-ndeyes* are socially expected to use reason and consideration to deal with each other. But the association's move was an outright, unjustifiable action, unbefitting for *dome-ndeye* ethics. Its action conforms to aggravated *dome-baaye* tendencies and shows how kinship is in fact a danger. It called for new approaches to interstate relations. Instead of using diplomatic channels to address this conflict, the two states needed to develop new strategies for handling it. For example, in 1972, the two countries had a disagreement over the border. But Toure reported that presidents Jawara and Senghor used diplomatic channels to settle the disagreements amicably:

Papers and not a quarrel, a fight or anger caused the border closure that happened around 1972. Some accords signed by the Gambia and Senegal expired and both countries were slow in renewing them. This affected the Keur Ayib -Farrafenni and Karang -Amdallai borders. They did what was called "*boundary*". When people came, they stopped at their frontier (*ku njuew emm sa frontiere*). The border stopped until they renewed the accords. Another border closure I witnessed resulted from the difficulties the police and gendarmes inflicted on us. The Senegalese Transport Association decided to protest (*fibpuu*). They said, Gambian transporters cannot be paying 30, 000 CFA francs for twelve months and Senegalese paid 100,000 for the same period. In addition, Gambian cars carried eight passengers at a time. They travelled everywhere in Senegal. Our Senegalese cars carried seven passengers but they never went to all destinations in The Gambia. That was the reason for the other "*boundary*" incident. When that happened, again, they called us to negotiate and we came to terms.²⁹⁸

Following Toure's narratives, we can discern that Senegalese transporters have had longstanding grievances about cross-border transport arrangements. These concerned the carrying capacity of Gambian vehicles, differences in the fees and duties levied on them in each country, access permissions and even how Gambian police and Senegalese gendarmes treat them on the cross-border routes. They also have a history of using the border between the two countries to protest about their grievances. Arguably, targeting the border is an effective way of ensuring a speedy audience from the authorities and speedy resolution of any grievances.

²⁹⁸ Interview with Pa Ibrahima Toure, Keur Ayib, Senegal, 13th February, 2013.

Raeymaekers and Jourdan argue that the border is a meeting point, a space for daily face-to-face contacts, immediate economic and social relations and has potential to make and unmake politics. It is also a space where "...order and disorder are constantly constructed and deconstructed, and spheres of authority are forged and intersect."²⁹⁹ These descriptions of the border make it an invaluable space for launching protests. For cross-border transporters, the border is also the centre of their economic activities. Additionally, the border is located at the edge of the state but its political economy is intertwined with the centre. Halting economic production at the border affects life at the centre, and consequently national authorities are motivated to quickly contain the disruptive effects of disorder at the fringe of the state.

Toure's narrative also helps us compare and contrast the way political authorities like presidents Jawara and Senghor handled border crisis to the way transporters prevailed over border disagreements. The former favoured diplomatic resolutions whereas the latter mostly opt for outright confrontation. However, the different approaches political authorities and transporters use to settle border disputes do not discount the longstanding chaotic interstate relations over the border.

The border closures that happened in 1972, 2000 and in 2004, used different approaches and had different motivations. But all these border closure incidences confirm a pattern: that there has been a lingering dent in interstate relations. In 1972, the two heads of states opted to close the border pending the renewal of the accords. This means even at the best of times when politicians in The Gambia and Senegal seemed to have cordial interpersonal relations, there was always a dark cloud of suspicion or

²⁹⁹Timothy Raeymaekers and Luca Jourdan (2009)'Economic opportunities and local governance on an African frontier: the case of the Semliki Basin (Congo-Uganda), *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 2009) 328.

reluctance to cooperate, trailing their cordiality. This reasserts how the border has been laden with political dividends for both state and non-state actors in Senegambia. State logics and the economic opportunities of the border make it a fertile ground for forging different kinds of relations. These relations intersect and diverge and compel both state and non-state actors to negotiate and renegotiate their ambitions around the border. Transporters can use the border to ‘*napp*’ or blackmail both the Senegalese and Gambian state. They secured monopoly over the cross-border routes. But this victory did not end cross-border and interstate economic rivalries. As such, for every border crisis, state authorities are forced to revisit existing policies to ensure economic and political situations at the border would be or remain at their advantage. The next section therefore explores Gambian authority’s reactions to the 2004 border crisis.

4.4.2: Gambian Responses to the Border Closures

When the Senegalese transporters closed the border in 2004, Gambian authorities showed mixed reactions to the incident. They considered it a staged economic sabotage from the Senegalese state. An official of the Gambian Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs shared Gambian authorities’ assessment of the border closure incident. He noted that:

The blocking of the re-export route during action by the unionists is of serious concern to us. Our position has always been that if Senegal wants The Gambia to open up its Trans-Gambia corridor, it should equally grant open access to The Gambia to its routes to Mali. It should allow unfettered access to Mali –bound goods, which come through our Port. If Malian and Guinean Transporters can enjoy open access to Senegalese routes, we see no reason why Senegal should make it difficult for Gambian Transporters to equally use the same routes to go to other countries. Gambian transporters need to be given access to Senegalese routes both within and outside Senegal. Granting access to each other’s routes has to be mutual. Therefore, granting open access to each other will be a win-win situation for both countries. As a Government we do not buy into the Senegalese response to transporter border blockades. Transporters and the unionists are not government. They can only do certain actions if their authorities properly back them. We are not in competition with Senegal. The economic space is big enough to accommodate both countries in their respective search for benefits to their countries. The ferries have been used as a major excuse in transporter actions. But The Gambia

Government continues to do all it can to solve the problems we have with the ferries.³⁰⁰

Gambian authorities viewed that the border closure incident was due to interstate rivalries over route access. The Trans-Gambia corridor is part of Gambia controlled domestic routes leading to Casamance. From this official account, Senegal desires unlimited access to the Trans-Gambia route, which was not being granted by Gambian authorities. Political insecurity in Casamance and the economic opportunities of the region provide legitimate reasons for Senegal to yearn for unlimited access to the Trans-Gambia. The Gambia's request to share Senegalese routes to Mali, to enhance its economic lifeline, the re-export trade is also politically and economically justified.

Superficially, it seems the interstate trouble over the border is an easy one; both countries need to grant the other's request and then with equal access the problem will be resolved. But there are complex political and economic ramifications for acceding to each other's demand. Consequently, both countries have to weigh the pros and cons of each decision they take regarding this matter to see if they can develop better strategies to achieve the "win, win" results the Gambian official envisaged. For example, if Senegal can use Gambian territory and routes to launch retaliatory military action against Casamance rebels, Gambians, especially neighbouring border communities to Casamance would pay a huge price for it. It would compound the insecurity these communities suffer as a result of hit and run attacks from the rebels. Additionally, aggrieving the Jolas of Casamance may potentially backfire and may spark a semi-insurgency in Foni, a predominantly Jola territory in The Gambia. As such, The Gambia government has no incentive to take sides in the Casamance conflict even though some people alleged that president Jammeh was secretly providing military and other assistance to Casamance rebels, especially after Senegal allegedly sponsored rebel soldiers (the Kartong attackers) to overthrow

³⁰⁰Skype interview with an official of The Gambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, 15th January, 2013.

Jammeh, which failed. Similarly, opening up Senegalese routes to Gambian re-export trade would bring significant economic losses to Senegal. Unless the two countries strategically work together to minimise the potential negative impacts conceding to each other's demand may entail, there would be more resistance than cooperation in resolving these interstate dilemmas.

Critically, Gambian authorities were convinced that the transporters were acting on behalf of the Senegalese state. Consequently, even after it negotiated with transporters to re-open the border, it remained suspicious of Senegalese intentions. Interestingly, Gambian views of the causes behind the border closure do not focus on transporters' claims of ill-treatment and economic exploitation on the cross-border routes.

The Gambian official's account about the reasons behind the border closure is a frank and non-evasive analysis of the complexities of interstate relations. It acknowledged that The Gambia-Senegal interstate relations have been a struggle and that deep animosities characterise it. This frank assessment contrasts with public statements officials of both governments bandy around about the enduring ethnic, social, religious and economic ties between the two countries. For example, in 1997, during The Gambia-Senegal inter-ministerial conference in Banjul, The Gambia's Major Bojang declared to the conference, "Peace in The Gambia is peace in Senegal."³⁰¹ It is common to hear politicians in both countries to make statements like Bojang's. But interstate animosity is real and it fails to disguise itself, sometimes.

Even before transporters became deeply implicated in interstate crisis, there was always a lingering suspicion between leaders of the two states, and this has a colonial legacy (see chapters 1 & 2). The transporters' involvement in interstate border disputes added a new layer to the complications over the border. They are a non-state actor with loaned sovereign powers and therefore can overexploit their powers to the detriment of interstate relations.

³⁰¹ "Peace in Gambia is peace in Senegal says Major Bojang at inter-ministerial conference in Banjul," *Daily Observer*, October 17, 1997.

Describing interstate relations as an act of “*diplomatie geographie*,” Senegalese career diplomat, Ambassador Saidou Nourou Ba, who also served as the Executive Secretary of the Senegambia Secretariat in Banjul from 1978-1981, observed the mysteries of interstate relations.³⁰² He noted that:

We are the same people who share the same culture and languages living in the same house but with two doors of entry. You can enter by The Gambia or Senegal. I think it is easier to be a diplomat elsewhere than to be a diplomat between neighbouring African countries. This is because everything is sensitive.³⁰³

Ba’s statement that “...everything is sensitive,” summarises the complicated nature of interstate relations. More recently, the shared transport links have been the most common subject in interstate tensions. But there have been other ongoing problems such as the longstanding dispute over the ownership of Tranquil, a border village. The Tranquil problem remains an intractable tension between the two countries. Majority of Gambians and Senegalese do not know about the Tranquil issue, much more why the two states are fighting over it. Most of the fight over Tranquil is being intentionally held away from public knowledge. More recently, when the Tranquil issue re-surfaced in the public domain, some citizens queried that the two countries have not been transparent about their relationship over the village. One writer mimicked official statements on interstate relations and queried that:

He urged understanding from both sides saying “there is no country in the sub-region that is so closely related in everything, as The Gambia and Senegal.” I am tired of Hearing this Statement because it obscures the real animosities lingering on both sides of the border. The so-called authorities are at loggerheads and everybody else is acting as if we are best of friends. What is of paramount relevancy to both peoples on both side of the border is trade and economic integration. Therefore create a free trade zone and let the people in and out of these countries. Prosperity brings down borders and enhances understanding and brotherhood. Instead what we are seeing is proxy conflict over an irrelevant village

³⁰²Sainey Darbo, “Saidou Nourou Ba, Senegalese Diplomat,” *Standard Newspaper*, November 14, 2014, accessed November 20, 2014, <http://standard.gm/site/bantaba/5252-Saidou-Nourou-Senegalese-diplomat>.

³⁰³*Ibid.*

while countless other border issues like free movement of people and goods along the border remain unattended to.³⁰⁴

The above statements are critical of why the two countries are fighting over Tranquil. However, it does not imply that the author understands the political relevance of this village to either country. The call for trade and economic integration seemed to offer straightforward solutions to interstate tensions. But as already indicated, there are diverse challenges to trade and economic integration in Senegambia. People who have vested interests in the border and its political economy are aware of the economic and political dilemmas it represents for both states.

Some people believe that transporters' involvement in interstate conflicts is politically expedient for both countries. They consider them as part of a broad strategy to distract Gambians and Senegalese from their domestic problems and to fool them about the complications in interstate relations.

In a focus group discussion on the border held in Keur Ayib in 2013, Oumar, a Senegalese youth from Kolda, Casamance, and a cross-border trader at the Keur Ayib border argued that there is political capital in The Gambia-Senegal border. He concluded that the 2002 and 2004 border closures were self-serving. They "were planned by Wade. He was getting more and more unpopular in Senegal. He wanted to be re-elected. He gave the unions excessive powers and used the border to please them. All the most recent border closures have been under his leadership, too. He used the Transport Association to protect his reputation."³⁰⁵ To what extent the borders were powerful enough to entrench Wade's political career in Senegal remained to be seen, given that he lost his aggressive re-election bid to Macky Sall in 2011. But even with that, it is clear that The Gambia-Senegal border carry political, economic and social power in Senegambia. The cross-border mobility of people and goods continue to develop new

³⁰⁴The writer who identified himself as Kemo was writing on the comments section of a Standard Newspaper's story written by Mustapha Darboe, "Gambia- Senegal border dispute cools," *Standard Newspaper*, **October 8, 2015**, accessed November 1, 2015. <http://standard.gm/site/news/8446-Gambia-Senegal-border-dispute-cools.html>.

³⁰⁵Interview with Oumar, Keur Ayib, Senegal, 13th February, 2013.

trends and therefore we can continue to learn from these realities. The ferry problem, which has been mentioned in passing in the account of the Gambian Ministry of Finance official, has been another source of transport related conflicts in interstate relations. To further understand the full reactions of Gambian authorities to transporters' border closures requires looking at the roles the ferries play in shaping transporter grievances and also in interstate politics. The next section revisits the ferry issue.

4.5: The Ferries: A Perennial Dilemma for Cross-Border Transport

Ferries mediate geographic and social mobility in Senegambia. Different nationalities among them Senegalese nationals (traders, truckers, automobile owners and ordinary citizens), Bissau Guineans, Conakry Guineans, Nigerians, Malians, European tourists cross from one bank of the River Gambia to the other. Different kinds of automobile vehicles also cross from one bank of the river to the other. In 2009/2010, a total number of 1.4 million assorted vehicles and 22.5 million passengers used the ferries to cross the Gambia River.³⁰⁶ These figures show that the ferries are important means of transport for people and for vehicles. The statistics is also an implicit reference to the economic gains The Gambia makes from the ferries. But the economic values of the ferries conflict with their political significance in interstate relations, and this renders ferries a significant source of conflict in The Gambia-Senegal relations.

The political dialogue about the ferries has been going on between the two countries from 1900.³⁰⁷ Ferries enhance cross-border mobility, which has political significance for both The Gambia and Senegal. But each country places a different value on them. The ferries aid north-south mobility for The Gambia, but the country has not effectively resolved the many

³⁰⁶PK Accountants and Business Advisers, *The Gambia Ports Authority Ferry Services Financial Statement for the Year Ended 31st December 2009*, (Banjul, 2010). Hali A Gai, *The Managing Director's Report*, The Gambia's Ports Authority, (Banjul, 2012).

³⁰⁷Internal Communication between Marine Department and the Ministry of Works and Communication, "The Gambia Road and Ferry Charges," January 4, 1962

impediments ferries posed to it. The ferries have faced perennial technical, managerial and financial constraints. More recently, it has also been beset with ferry personnel attitude problems. Most of the times, there is almost always something bogging down the ferries. This has made some people to advocate for bridging the ferry crossings, especially the Trans-Gambia Bamba Tenda- Yelitenda crossing.

For many decades, and under both colonial and post-colonial governments, Senegal has continuously pressured The Gambia for it to bridge the Trans-Gambia crossing. However, since independence, Gambian authorities have felt much less sense of urgency in tackling the ferry issue or building the bridge. As already noted in chapters 1 and 2, Senegal has vested interests in the ferries because “Casamance is virtually partitioned from the rest of Senegal by Gambia, with road traffic forced to cross two international borders (and board a ferry) between Dakar and Ziguinchor, the region’s capital, or to make a long detour east around The Gambia.”³⁰⁸ This geographic rupture constrained Senegal’s efforts to forge a sense of “one Senegal” or “a whole Senegal” with Casamance.

Senegal’s political obsession with having reliable transport connections to Casamance are similar to the need Brazil had in the 1920s and 1930s, “...to break down the barriers to national integration in a peaceful and orderly way.”³⁰⁹ To develop a shared vision for an integrated nation, Brazil resorted to the automobile, road-building, and technology to reach out to isolated territories. However, unlike Senegal, no country separated one part of Brazil from another. The territorial rupture between Senegal and Casamance also motivated the region’s cessation struggles.

³⁰⁸Pierre Englebert, “Compliance and Defiance to National Integration in Barotseland and Casamance,” *Africa Spectrum* (2005), 40; The alternative route to Casamance through Senegalese territory (Tamba Counda) is very long. Journeys through that route means greater financial cost, more time and more risk especially with the separatist war in Casamance.

³⁰⁹But one could argue that 20th century state-building in Brazil has left some inland parts of Brazil not well connected to coastal regions. Joel Wolfe, *Autos And Progress, The Brazilian Search for Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 35.

This has been a concern to politicians, intellectuals, business people and even artists in Senegal.

Senegalese musicians like Youssou Ndour have used their songs to decry Senegal's geographic woes. For instance, his Wolof lyrics "Senegal *sunugal*," (Senegal, our boat) or "Senegal *ben a bopela*," (Senegal has one head) have both metaphorical and political significance for Senegal and the Casamance rebellion. The words warn about the impact rebellion can have on the territorial integrity of Senegal. If people on a boat (signifying Senegal and Casamance as one country) decide to divide it, then the boat will sink. Similarly, if the head is hatched into two, the individual dies. This means, as a nation, Senegal cannot afford to divide its territory, lest it should sink and die. The words are therefore a nationalist's cry from an artist activist but they eloquently sum-up the geographic dilemma Senegal faces with Casamance and even The Gambia. Thus, Senegal has a major stake in the ferries, the Bamba-Tenda- Yelitenda crossing and in cross-border mobility in general.

Ordinary people also have an important stake in the ferries. The ferries have been the heart of cross-border transport for both passenger and freight traffics. They provide rural-urban and interstate connectivity in Senegambia and beyond. They facilitate the services of other transport modes. Even under the disintegrated transport network, they still maintain an intermodal linkage with other modes of transport on the cross-border routes.

Five modes of cross-border transport operated under the joint transport network; public ferries, buses of the defunct Gambia Public Transport Corporation (GPTC), privately owned commercial automobile vehicle and horse/donkey carts. Under the restructured transport network, the *Jakartas* (motorcycles) became an additional mode on the cross-border routes. These transport modes were based on a dual transport agency system. Public and private agencies interacted within a multidimensional and complex interconnected transport network. The travel frequencies of

one mode were dependent on another.³¹⁰ For example, the frequency of ferry trips from Banjul- Barra and at Bamba-Tenda- Yelitenda affected the length of travel and the demand for other transport modes on the cross-border routes. These include automobile, bus, horse/donkey cart and *Jakarta* transport services at Amdallai-Karang and Farrafenni-Keur Ayib borders. Conversely, from Barra-Banjul and Keur Ayib-Farrafenni, ferry services affected the rapid flow and transit of traffic arriving from automobile, bus, cart and *Jakarta* sources.

Clearly, poor ferry services affect demand for the other transport modes. But also other transport modes can affect ferry services. For example, congestions caused by motor vehicles affect ferries by causing poor ferry services, time lost, losses in passenger volume, revenue and these constraints have social costs to both users and the ferry operators. The delivery of ferry services is also affected by high passenger volumes, uncontrolled overloading, the presence of huge numbers of stranded automobile vehicles at the crossing terminals and the presence of huge numbers of heavy overloaded trucks on the ferries. These situations can cause occasional accidents on the ferry and contribute to the rapid wear and tear of the ferry craft. What happens to the ferries is not only important to Gambian authorities and ferry management but also to other users of the ferries.

Cross-border transporters also have an important stake in the ferries, as users of the ferries. The ferries are a starting, centre and end points for cross-border traffic. They serve areas in Senegambia and beyond such as Guinea Bissau or Guinea Conakry. Ferries foster overlaps between domestic and cross-border transport. Domestic cross-border transport starts from a specific border terminal location to an outer region within the domestic geography. Or, it originates from an outer location to the border

³¹⁰Wooden dug-out boats (pirogues) are now commonly used as alternative to the ferries at the Banjul-Barra crossing are excluded in this study although these have been big historically in the contraband trade, especially to Guinea Bissau and Casamance.

terminal. Hence, the ferries have made cross-border transport between the two countries a domestic, interstate and transnational concern.

There is no doubt that the ferries' issue is a legitimate concern for transporters as much as it is to Gambian and Senegalese authorities, ordinary people and the West Africa sub-region. It was therefore politically expedient for members of the Senegalese Transport Association to set part of their agenda to disintegrate the common transport network around the ferries. Ferries have for long suffered from different problems and therefore a rich source for transporter activism against Gambian authorities. In the next section, I will discuss how initial complaints about ill-treatment and corruption on the interstate routes evolved to place the ferries at the centre of claims against Gambian authorities.

Figure 3: List of ferries that operated on The Gambia River

Name of Ferry	Craft Type	Service Route	Operating Times
BANJUL- BARRA ROUTE			
Banjul	Steel	Banjul-Barra	0800-2100hr
Niumi	Steel	Banjul-Barra	0800-2100hr
Barra	Wooden	Banjul-Barra	Break periods of Barra and Niumi
TRANS-GAMBIA ROUTE			
Saloume	N/A	Bamba Tenda-Yelli-Tenda	N/A
The Amang Kanyi	N/A	Bamba Tenda-Yelli-Tenda	N/A
Kerewan	N/A	Bamba Tenda-Yelli-Tenda	N/A
PROVINCIAL FERRIES			
Kerewan	5 Power Steamers	Kerewan	N/A
Kaur	N/A	Kaur	N/A
Jarang	N/A	Jarang	N/A
Sankuli Kunda		Sankuli Kunda	

Bansang	2 dumb ferries	Bansang	N/A
Basse	N/A	Basse	N/A
OTHER FERRIES ON THE GAMBIA RIVER			
Lady Chilel Jawara	Boat River steamer	Upriver	Weekly

Source: Author's compilation.

4.6: Complaints Against Ferries: High User Fees and Conduct of Ferry Personnel

In 2000, ferry services were reliable and the ferries operated as scheduled by The Gambia Ferries Department. However, the demand for services was higher than the supply. Hence, the ferries were overloaded as many people and vehicles eager to cross, queue at the terminals. Ferry authorities increased user fees and argued that this was in line with ferry reforms programme.³¹¹ The ferries were also privatised to increase efficiency in their management and services.

Passengers and transporters were annoyed about the fee increases and also the inadequacy of ferry services. The latter issue caused passengers stranded at the terminals to bribe ferry personnel for them to be given priority crossing on the congested ferries. It became widespread knowledge that people who want to circumvent the long queues waiting to cross on the ferries bribe ferry personnel to get on board the ferry. The ferry bribe-to-cross initiative developed into a network in which non-ferry personnel who hang around the terminal looking for any opportunity to make money became middle men between passengers and ferry personnel who were engaged in this bribery scheme. Passengers pay to these middlemen who in turn pay ferry personnel on duty to let payees on board the ferry. This illicit pay and go service became popular and chaotic for the Ferries Department. Senegalese transporters were quick to see how they can use these widely known problems to their advantage.

³¹¹ Interview with Bachirou Ndiaye, Dakar, Senegal, 16th May, 2013.

Bachirou Ndiaye noted that the ferry issue was an overriding concern to them. “From 2000- 2002, there was plenty commotion about the ferry crossing among us. To cross, small cars paid 35,000 CFA francs, lorries and trucks paid 80,000 to 90,000 CFA and baggage fees were not standardised. The ferry crossing people did what they liked.”³¹² There was general knowledge that ferry reforms seemed to be for the worse. Given the important roles ferries play in cross-border and interstate mobility, it was therefore a legitimate concern for transporters’ agitation. They decided to advocate for an end to the use of ferries on the river Gambia. This automatically turned them into pro-bridge advocates and they joined the fray of the struggle over the bridge issue, as the ferry reforms veered off track due to problems we will discuss in the next section.

4.7. The Ferry Reforms: A Case Study of Institutional Tension and Crisis

Generally, when institutions or businesses embark on reforms, they expect to create better and more efficient systems. But the ferry reforms were an antithesis of this expectation. For a long time, the ferries operated as a public transport system and fare prices were deliberately controlled to make them affordable to the public. There were also some ferries that operated free of charge to users because they were located at strategic places that needed welfare-based transport systems. This means two systems of ferries operated in The Gambia. The first types of ferries operated on two major crossing points, namely, Banjul-Barra and Bamba-Tenda- Yellitenda (Trans-Gambia). The former operated at breakeven points. The latter has been historically the most profitable ferry service in the country. Six other services operated in rural Gambia and the profits and income made from the Banjul-Barra and Bamba-Tenda- Yellitenda were used to subsidise these provincial ferries.

³¹² *Ibid.*

The provision of welfare-based and low-cost ferry services were to ensure that people on both sides of the border can access affordable ferry services, to promote intra-state and interstate mobility, contact and trade in Senegambia. The search for affordable ferry services has been a longstanding quest that originated from the colonial period. The long search for affordable transport services is justified by Fitch's study of the importance of transport systems and transport policies in developed world contexts. He noted that "...transport systems play so large a role in shaping the physical and social relations of...communities."³¹³ Transport is also important for securing "national defence, interstate commerce and protection of general welfare," in every society. ³¹⁴ It is therefore understandable that given the geographic pressures in Senegambia, The Gambia and Senegal interstate communication focused a lot on transport. It was also understandable that interstate dialogue on the ferries also centered on welfare-based pricing, service quality and management (see chapters 1, 2 and 5).

The new ferry reforms programme, which was part of the World Bank and IMF sponsored public sector reforms package for The Gambia brought new management principles to the ferries sector. It employed concepts of joint public and private partnership management to ferry services. This concept was profit-oriented and deviated from the longstanding welfare values, which historically characterised the management culture and operations of Gambian ferries. The decision to adopt a for-profit management principle for the operation of the ferries was aimed to make them more profitable and customer oriented. But unfortunately, this worsened ferry operations. The pre-existing tolerable inefficiencies of the ferries became major inefficiencies. The reforms became a complete failure from the word go.

The reforms were not grounded in suitable professional, managerial and entrepreneurial principles. For example, the reforms minimised the

³¹³ Lyle C. Fitch and Associates, *Urban Transportation and Public Policy*, (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company 1964), 6; Same argument applies to The Gambia and Senegambia at large.

³¹⁴ *Ibid*, 6.

longstanding watchdog roles the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and The Gambia Ports Authority (GPA) have had over the Department of Ferry Services. For a longtime, the Ministry of Finance and The Gambia Ports Authority supervised the Department of Ferry Services. But under the new arrangement, the Ministry of Finance became an investor and a shareholder in the ferry sector. GPA has been the overseer of ferry services since The Gambia Public Transport Corporation went out of business. But it also became a shareholder in the ferries venture.

To further complicate the running of the ferry services, the new system allowed the President Jammeh family companies -The Kanilai Family Farms- to buy shares in the new venture. Foreign shareholders also had stakes in the ferries sector. This muddled-up, complex share-holding venture was further complicated by the bad management principles adopted for the running of the ferries.

The new bosses running the ferries were mostly representatives of the foreign shareholders and were allegedly corrupt and inept. This belief that high-level officials at the Ferries Department were corrupt made low-level employees to also engage in unstrained corruption. This situation was bad for the delivery of quality ferry services and for clients. But it served transporters' agenda well. The reforms contributed to changing public attitudes and personal practices of transporters but also public officials in The Gambia. In other words, institutional reorientation caused institutional shifts in the management culture of ferry services, which affected the political economy of the ferries, causing serious tensions for The Gambia Senegal relations.

Looking at some of the ferry finances during the reforms is instructive. In 2006, for example, ferry tariffs were increased 30 per cent. But ferry operations suffered financial instability. The total operating revenue for the year was D92.1 million. This contrasted with the annual gross profit, which was D73.8 million. Operating revenue increased to D115. 3 million in 2007, with a gross profit of D45.5 million. In 2008, the operating revenue was

D154.3 million, and this increased to D167.8 million in 2010. Annual gross profits for both periods were D91.2 million and D85.7 million, respectively.

The initial phases of the reform were able to achieve increases to ferry income by establishing strong internal financial controls in ferry administration and at all stations. They made improvements in ticketing and built a weighbridge, which priced vehicle fees based on their tonnage. But these good practices were not sustained in 2006, 2007 and 2008, when tariffs were revised upwards.³¹⁵ After tax revenue increased from D37.6 million (in 2006), to D59.7 million (in 2007), but decreased to D13.1 million (in 2008). Again, it increased to D14.9 million (in 2009) and D54.5 million (in 2010).

Remarkably, increases in training costs, fuel costs, bad debts as well as slow moving, and obsolete equipment accounted for the figures for 2009 and 2010. Furthermore, the gross value of assets increased from D436.9 million in 2006 to D576.8 million in 2010. Accumulated depreciation charges also rose from D115.3 million in 2006, to D212.9 million in 2010. This gave ferries a net book value of D363.9 million.³¹⁶

In 2010, The Gambia government and its foreign partners embarked on more reforms in the ferries sector without evaluating the mixed outcomes of ongoing reforms in the sector. On March 5th 2011, Gambian authorities signed a joint venture agreement with a Greek company, Gallia Holdings, Ltd., to establish, develop, manage and operate two ferry boats at two major crossing points across the River Gambia. The latter was also assigned to manage the existing fleet of ferries deployed throughout the country. This company owned 55 percent of the shares of the joint venture. Three other companies owned the rest of the shares. Social Security and Housing

³¹⁵Currencies are quoted in Gambian dalasis (D).

³¹⁶PK Accountants, *"Ferry Services Financial Statement, 2010; The Managing Director's Report, 2012, The Gambia Ports Authority.*

Finance Corporation (SSHFC) owned 22.5 per cent. The Gambia Ports Authority (GPA) also owned 22.5 per cent of the shares.

In a rather confusing business model, the joint venture established a separate management company to run the ferry services. Some of the stakeholders in this management company went by different names, but in reality, they were associates of the shareholders of the joint venture. The management company was called The Gambia Ferry Services Company, Ltd (GFSMC). The shares in the management company were distributed as follows: the GPA owned 80 per cent of the shares and the Ministry of Finance controlled 20 per cent. The new venture also established another company called the Aljamdu Ferry Company, Ltd. The majority shareholder of the venture, Gallia Holdings owned 55 per cent of the shares and the rest (45 per cent) went to SSHFC. Another sub-company Kansala Ferry Company, Ltd., was also formed. Gallia holding controlled 55 per cent of its shares and GPA controlled the rest of the shares.

The GFSMC had the overall task of managing all the other ferry companies. Its management personnel consisted of five directors, three of whom - the Managing Director, Director of Technical Services and Director of Finance - were officials of Gallia Holdings. The other two senior personnel at the company were the Deputy Director and Director of Operations –both were Gambian personnel. Activities of the management company were funded with a 15 percent levy from the operating revenues of the other three companies. The following support departments- Finance, Administration, Audit, Procurement, Revenue Generation and Marketing IT and Revenue Controls and Stores - assisted the directors in the day-to-day operation of the ferry services.³¹⁷ Thus, even with marginal revenue increases in user fees for 2008/09, the reform increased the operation costs of ferries. It also decreased profit margins enormously. Passenger crossing fees, lorry/truck crossing fees, motor vehicles crossing fees, crossing coupons and warrants and other charges/ fees amounted to D154.334 million in 2008. These figure

³¹⁷See for an example Marine Department, Gambia, “*Trans Gambia Road and Ferry Charges*, (Bathurst: Gambia, 4th January, 1962) No. F/27/18.

increased to D167.881 million in 2010.³¹⁸ But the operations cost was not sustainable to make the reforms a profitable one.

Figure 4: Ferry Income 2008/2009

	31- Dec, 08	31-Dec, 09
Item	Amount in dalasis	
Passenger crossing fees	D34, 727,000	D39, 763,000
Lorry/Truck crossing fees	D54, 826,000	D59, 295,000
Motor vehicles crossing fees	D54, 251,000	D58, 021,000
Crossing Coupons and warrants	D1, 577,000	D3, 426,000
Other charges/fees	D8, 953,000	D7, 376,000
Total	D154, 334,000	D167, 881,000

Source: PK Accountants, Ferry Services Financial statement 2010

In a blog comment posted on 7th January, 2014, Sidi Sanneh, a former Gambian Foreign Minister revealed that the ferry joint venture initiative required the procurement of “a new fleet of ferries” to “take over services” at the Banjul-Barra crossing. Gallia Holdings reportedly bought two “new” ferries “Aljamdu” and “Kansala”, in 2011 at the cost of 6,345,000 Euros, or about 8.7 million US dollars. On 23rd July, 2011, both ferries were inaugurated to start service. Sanneh charged that:

it became evident soon after the vessels' arrival that there was trouble. The vessels' size and type were inappropriate. The roll on, roll off, vessels were incompatible with the existing ramps, suggesting that the vessels were not suitable for the purposes for which they were intended. For instance, the entire front end of one of the vessels broke off and sank at sea off Barra in January last year, and the other has been mooring at the port facilities in Banjul or at the TransGambia crossing up-river.

³¹⁸PK Accountants, “Ferry Services Financial Statement,” 2010.

According to Sanneh, both vessels shared the same ID number: IMO 8881577 and built date, which was January 1987. "At least one or both vessels were registered in the Marshall Islands, presumably by the new venture company under a different name. While the beneficial owner or owners is/are unlisted, the registered owner is listed as Contess Navigations Inc., in the Marshall Island. However, the registration of one of them was later transferred to Sierra Leone," (Sanneh blog post).

The information from Sanneh indicated that the ferry reforms has been a "shady" business and that personnel lied about ferry registration details as well as the age and condition of the ferries. Implicitly, corruption was entrenched across all sectors of the ferries reform programme. The imported vessels, which were supposed to be new ones, were actually 27 years old, according to Sanneh. He also revealed that one of the vessels "Sophia P" had an accident record and it traced its last owner to one Mr. Alexandros Boufis of Spetses, Greece.³¹⁹

The reforms also highlighted institutional maladjustment. The history, local and cross-border contexts of ferry operations in The Gambia were not well understood under these reforms. Management also misunderstood the political implications the ferries have for the country and for cross-border mobility in Senegambia. This lack of appropriate knowledge was worsened by pervasive and outright corruption in the ferries sector. For example, it was difficult to account for the 45 per cent share the Gambian government owned in the joint venture.

Bad management practices were worsened by poor operational plans for ferry services. Sanneh alleged that "Meanwhile, the continued lack of regular ferry service between Barra and the capital city of Banjul, is causing major disruptions to the economy and the lives of ordinary Gambians."³²⁰

³¹⁹ Sidi Sanneh blog, *The "new ferries are 27 years old,"* <http://sidisanneh.blogspot.com/2014/01/the-new-ferries-are-27-years-old.html>, accessed Sunday 12th January 2014, accessed Sunday 12th January 2014.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

The reforms were expected to make things better for all stakeholders. But instead, they had a reverse effect on everyone.

Frequent breakdowns, rising operation costs, which included high fuel, administrative, and maintenance costs and significant revenue loss led to high indebtedness and poor services. Ferry services took loans to cover revenue shortfalls. New administrative and operational policies desperate to recover the full-cost of ferry operations revised tariff rates upwards. Increasing user fees at unreasonable intervals became the option for addressing the many problems that beset the ferries companies. In 2013, there was a 50 percent increase to the passenger fees on Banjul-Barra and the Trans-Gambia ferries. The tariff table below shows the different charges and increments to them under the 2013 cost recovery initiative. The figures appear in both currencies (Gambian Dalasis and Senegalese CFA Franc).³²¹

Figure 5: New Passenger, small vehicle and freight proposed tariff- Effective 1st April 2013: The Dalasi Tariff

	Banjul-Barra		Transgambia	
	Existing	New	Existing	New
Passenger	D10	D15	D5	D10
Bicycle	D20	D25	D13	D15
Private vehicles				
Motor cycle (including Ridder)	D25	D30	D18	D25
Car	D155	D190	D80	D100
Jeeps and Double cabins	D190	D240	D90	D110
Car and Trailer	D290	D350	D145	D180
Commercial Vehicles				
1 to 7 Pax	D155	D190	D80	D100

³²¹There has been a long-standing practice of quoting ferry service user fees in both currencies and payments are acceptable in either of the currencies. See: The Gambia Ports Authority (2013) New passenger, Small vehicle and Freight Proposed tariff-Effective 1st April 2013

8 to 14 Pax	D190	D240	D90	D115
15 to 20 Pax	D310	D390	D155	D190
21 to 35 Pax	D475	D590	D230	D290
36 to 44 Pax	D790	D900	D475	D590
45 and above Pax	D945	D1190	D785	D900
Others				
Rice, Groundnut, Cement, ETC (50kg)	D10	D15	D10	D15
Pre-packed carton/Package (medium)	D20	D25	D20	D25
Cattle	D40	D50	D10	D15
Sheep/ Goat	D10	D15	D10	D15

Source: The Gambia Ports Authority, New Tariff Scales, 2013.

Figure 6: New Passenger, small vehicle and freight proposed tariff- Effective 1st April 2013: The CFA Franc Tariff

	Banjul-Barra		Trans-gambia	
	Existing	New	Existing	New
Passenger	150 CFA	300 CFA	300 CFA	300 CFA
Bicycle	700 CFA	900 CFA	600 CFA	800 CFA
Private Vehicles				
Motor Cycle(Including Ridder)	800 CFA	1,000CFA	700 CFA	900 CFA
Car	4,500 CFA	5,600 CFA	2,200 CFA	2,800 CFA
Jeeps and Double Cabins	5,200 CFA	6,500 CFA	2,700 CFA	3,400 CFA
Car and Trailer	8,000 CFA	10,000 CFA	4,000 CFA	5,000 CFA
Commercial Vehicles				
1 to 7 Pax	4,500 CFA	5,600 CFA	2,300 CFA	2,900 CFA
8 to 14 Pax	5, 200 CFA	6,500 CFA	2,700 CFA	3,400 CFA

15 to 20 Pax	9,000 CFA	11, 200 CFA	4,500 CFA	5,600 CFA
21 to 35 Pax	13,500 CFA	16,800 CFA	6,800 CFA	8,500 CFA
36 to 44 Pax	22,000 CFA	27,500 CFA	13,200 CFA	16,500 CFA
45 and above Pax	26,500 CFA	33,000 CFA	22,000 CFA	27, 500 CFA
Others				
Rice, Groundnut, Cement, ETC (50kg)	300 CFA	400 CFA	300 CFA	300 CFA
Pre-packed Carton/Package (medium)	600 CFA	800 CFA	600 CFA	600 CFA
Cattle	1000 CFA	1,200 CFA	300 CFA	300CFA
Sheep/Goat	300 CFA	400 CFA	200 CFA	200 CFA

Source: The Gambia Ports Authority, New CFA Franc Tariff Scales, 2013.

The exogenous driven ferry reforms hurt many aspects of the country's political economy and interstate and transporter-state relations. The Senegalese Transport Association opposed the reforms. It also opposed the long-standing practice of paying ferry fees in either currency of the two states. These fueled new cross-border, interstate and transporter-state tensions. To put pressure on the ferries authorities and the Gambia government to abandon their so-called reforms, transporters embarked on frequent border closures. They hoped that these would also force Gambian authorities to seriously work on plans to bridge the Trans-Gambia crossing. It set the stage for more mobilisation and protest against Gambian authorities.

The bad management of the ferries supported and justified transporters plans to disintegrate the transport network. They also stepped up their pro-bridge advocacy (see chapter 5). Since the ferries affect the public too, transporters effectively used it to gain public support for their protests. In their reluctance to admit that the reforms were a failure, the Gambian government and ferry shareholders stubbornly held onto their

reforms. Transporters also refused to back-down from their protest agenda. The ferries became an object of contention in cross-border and interstate relations in Senegambia.

Bad ferry reforms, institutional shifts and corruption interfered with the informal processes that historically promoted cooperative relations in cross-border transport. *Dome-ndeye* and *wullere* were completely ignored in interpersonal interactions. Competition over resources intensified conflict and *dome-baaye* behavioural tendencies in the transport sector, contributing to the disintegration of the common transport network. The disintegrated transport network created an opportunity for the emergence of new actors in cross-border transport. These new actors benefited from new economic opportunities that came from the disintegration of the transport network. But the new economic processes compounded tensions in interstate relations (see chapter 5).

4.8: Conclusion

This chapter has addressed how cross-border transport was transformed since the start of the new millennium from an area of cooperation to a sector infested with conflicts. It identified how transport has played an important role in the recurrence of interstate political difficulties in Senegambia. It also identified the various interests in the transport sector and how different stakeholders creatively used the border to pursue their different goals. It also showed how economic concerns have been central to interstate political difficulties in Senegambia. This chapter therefore contributes to our understanding of the recurrence of interstate political difficulties between the two countries in recent years. It leads to chapter 5, which explores how changes in cross-border transport opened new avenues for growth and for more conflict, which further hurt The Gambia-Senegal interstate relations.

CHAPTER 5

TACTICS FOR SURVIVAL–JAKARTA, CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE MEDIA

“If you do not know what branch to hang on, stay on the ground.”
(A Mandinka proverb)

5.0: New faces, New Tensions

The Senegalese Transport Association became the “new sovereigns of the border,” after they’ve engineered the break-up of The Gambia-Senegal joint transport network (see chapters 3 & 4). They monopolised cross-border transport on Senegalese routes. However, transport services expanded to cater for new demands for services. By the end of 2009, new transport entrepreneurs used a new brand of motorcycle imported from Indonesia to provide intermediate border transport services at the Karang-Amdallai border. The locals named the motorcycles *Jakarta*, after the Indonesian capital.

The *Jakarta* is the new rival to *clandos* and carts in the intermediate border transport business. Its drivers contribute to border transport market and intermodal conflicts. They also create tensions in the border communities. Some communities on the Gambian side of the border accuse *Jakarta* drivers of stealing their livestock. *Jakarta* drivers also constantly fight with the office of the Karang mayor over taxation and other issues. They also fight with Gambian authorities for banning them from Gambian border communities due to their alleged excesses.

This chapter therefore explores how conflict can have both positive and negative outcomes for society. The break-up of the joint transport network created new economic opportunities, which *Jakarta* drivers exploit.

However, new economic opportunities exist side by side with new forms of conflict in the transport market. Additionally, the chapter highlights other nuances of state-society relations and how state and non-state actors can use different resources at their disposal to enhance their interests. As part of these processes, the chapter also explores how different actors or even organisations can gain from conflict. Media and civil society groups boost their images or create work opportunities for themselves as advocates for The Gambia-Senegal interstate relations or Senegambian unity. This chapter also provides examples of relations where individuals are primarily motivated by economic incentives and not by social and religious values for cooperative relations. It prepares us for chapters 6 and 7, which show how traders and *talibee* networks, unlike transporters, have been more interested in enhancing close connections between the two countries. The chapter also re-echoes Zartman's observation that the behaviour and practices of parties to a conflict determine how easily a certain conflict can be resolved, transformed, managed or prevented.³²² We will see how his statement is reflected in this chapter and from the chapter outline below.

The first part of the chapter is the introduction, which is followed by an ethnography on the origins of the *Jakarta* transport in Karang, the kinds of conflict it creates and how its drivers' activities are a co-extension of transporter border activism. It also looks at how it contributes to transporter-state and transporter-society conflicts in Senegambia. The second part of the chapter deals with how other non-state actors like the media and civil society groups engaged with interstate conflicts and what benefits they derive from them. The type of language the media uses to frame interstate tensions and interstate relations give us other examples of how language is routinely employed to (re) create and (re) enact social experiences of the border, the one-ness discourse and interstate relations in Senegambia (see chapter 1, 2 & 3). Pro-Senegambia unity civil society groups also use

³²² I. William Zartman, "Introduction, Toward the Resolution of International Conflicts," in *Peacemaking In International Conflict, Methods & Techniques, Revised Edition*, ed. I. William Zartman (Washington D.C: United States Institute of Peace, 2007), 6.

language as a tool to support their Senegambia unity agenda. Civil society groups implicitly compete *talibee* networks, but they share a common agenda for protecting cross-border and interstate relations (see chapter 7).³²³ The conclusion of the chapter leads us to chapter 6, which deals with modes of behaviour that foster more cross-border connections and less conflict in interstate relations.

5.1: The Birth of the Jakarta in Karang

The Gambia-Senegal restructured cross-border transport network gave rise to the need for intermediate transport that connects cross-border passengers bound for long-haul journeys, to transport at the new border motor parks (see chapter 4). Some private car owners illegally used their cars as shared taxis to ferry people from the border to the motor parks. This practice is termed “stealing the road” and denotes how people try to temporarily profit from the gaps in of the new transport situation. Such illegal underground /black market taxis are locally called *clandos*. From its urban origins, *clandos* have become an integral part of Senegal’s transport landscape. They found a niche in Karang and became an important part of the cross-border intermediate transport market.

Usually, a *clando* carries three passengers behind, two in front and a driver. Drivers have to have a full load before they start a trip. During low peak times, passengers’ time may be wasted in *clandos* since it may take up to thirty minutes or more before a *clando* gets a full load for a trip. This tendency to waste passengers’ time inspired some Karang youth to create alternative intermediate transport services using the motorcycle.

Karang is the first border community to use the motorcycle as a commercial means of transport in Senegambia. Later, Keur Ayib and other border villages followed its footsteps.³²⁴ Karang borrowed its motorcycle commercial transport idea from the town of Kaolack, located about 74

³²³ This captures Kaldor’s views that parties to a conflict like the mediators may have different agendas, see Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era, Second Edition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

³²⁴ Interview with Oumar Low, Accountant, Mayor’s Office, Karang, 27th February, 2013.

kilometers from the Karang-Amdallai border and 88 kilometers from the Farrafenni-Keur Ayib border.

Strategically located for both sides of the border, Kaolack is a major communication junction in Senegambia. It is considered “a frontier town,” with a dynamic, creative economic environment. It has a vibrant black market, which sells all kinds of things. It is notable for importing consumer goods from The Gambia through the Karang-Amdallai and Keur Ayib-Farrafenni borders. It also “exports” its ideas and other local practices to The Gambia and to other parts of Senegal. A highway connects Kaolack to east, north, south and west Senegal. It has a huge youthful population and most of them are economically innovative and work in the informal economy.

Youth in Kaolack first started the use of the motorcycle as a low income and rapid commercial transport, amid widespread youth unemployment in Senegal. For a fee, a rider of a motorcycle carries a passenger behind him and takes him to any destination within Kaolack. Ibrahin Nian, a youth and a native of Kaolack, relocated from Kaolack to Karang, to set-up an auto mechanic business there, following the restructuring of the cross-border transport network. Nian’s mechanic business was not profitable and so he brought a Cee, an Italian brand motorcycle from Kaolack, and began using it as a transport for hire at *attaya vous*.³²⁵ Youth, who knew how to ride, rented the motorcycle from him and returned it at the end of the agreed time.

Nian’s motorcycle for hire business became prosperous and popular. He negotiated the hire price with the client and all transactions were conducted at *attaya vous*, a place for socialisation and friendship. Later, two of Nian’s friends, Oumar Low and Assan Badian, joined the business. “As an unemployed school leaver, I joined this hassle-free business. Daily, I sat at *vous* chatting with friends, renting my motorcycle to clients. It was

³²⁵Green-tea drinking community roadside meeting places, chat spots or debate hangouts for youth, especially the unemployed.

simple...no sweat at all.”³²⁶ Through these three friends, the motorcycle became an important commercial transport at The Gambia-Senegal border.

Between 2008 and 2009, a new motorcycle brand called *TVS* was introduced in the market. Longer and faster than the *Cee*, the *TVS* comfortably carried a second passenger behind the rider. This gave rise to the idea of a rider who takes passengers to agreed destinations for a fee. Slowly, people in the community who wanted to avoid the delays *clandos* can cause patronised *TVS* drivers and paid them for quick rides to places within Karang and to nearby border communities. *TVS* was convenient for shuttling within Karang, between Karang and Amdallai, or to neighbouring border communities. It became the new deal for a growing number of people in the community, who considered it as a more cost effective and time saving alternative to *clandos* and carts. The motorcycle rental business filled a niche, transforming motorcycle entrepreneurship in Karang. However, another model, the *Jakarta*, displaced the *TVS*. It was faster and more comfortable than the latter. As noted below in the next section, it would completely transform border motorcycle entrepreneurship in Senegambia.

5.1.1: Competing Border Automobile Transport and Clandos: Structuring a New Niche

By 2013, at the time of my fieldwork in Karang, *Jakarta* transport dominated the local intermediate transport market, almost displacing *clandos*. Interestingly, its per trip/ fare price was higher than that of a clando. I asked people why they were paying more for *Jakarta* rides, when they could pay less for a *clandos* and I was told that: “People are now pressed with time. They prefer the fastest transport. However, there are people in Karang who no one can convince to ride on a *Jakarta*. It scares them. Its accident records are high compared to other transport types.”³²⁷ People desire the fastest transport, irrespective of how much it costs them. But some people are more comfortable with getting to their destinations in a slow, safe

³²⁶Interview with Oumar Low, Karang, Senegal, 27th February, 2013.

³²⁷*Ibid.*

transport. Thus, the desire for fast travel versus the desire for safe travel made the *Jakarta* an object of controversy in Karang and in most border villages around Karang.

Generally, most elderly people in these border communities were against the use of the *Jakarta* as a form of public transport. They reasoned that riders and passengers are exposed to frequent road accidents.³²⁸ They antagonise its presence and use in their communities. In contrast, it is the favourite transport for the youth and the younger generation. *Jakarta* is both supported and un-supported in the community and irrespective of this controversy around it, it has entrenched itself as a formidable border transport. It broke the monopoly of automobile transport in the border transport market and beyond. It has a growing market share in the intermediate transport market. The huge economic potential it has, encouraged the Karang mayor's office to extend its taxation programme to it. The mayor's office levies a 2000 CFA francs monthly tax on each commercial *Jakarta* in Karang. These taxes appear in the regional treasury in Foundiougne, the administrative headquarters of the Saloum region and the national treasury in Dakar.

I use the case study on the *Jakartas* in Karang to show how kinship discourses are irrelevant to some economic relations in Senegambia, to reinforce our argument that there are limits to the use of kinship discourses and this supports the neoclassical and Marxist thinking that culture and religion are subordinate to economic processes. Additionally, kinship discourses seemed to resonate less with youth, especially as they confront economic hardship. The case study also shows how different people use the resources they have in the border to advance their interests. It also shows how the border is both a source of tension and cooperation in relations between state and non-state actors. The next section looks at the relationship between the mayor's office and *Jakartas*.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

5.1.2: The Mayor's Office and the *Jakarta*

Karang was upgraded into a new commune around 2008 and after that, it elected its first mayor Ousmane Sene, the son of a retired Gambian police officer. As a new commune, Karang needs to mobilise its own resources to finance most commune development initiatives. The *Jakarta*'s viability as a significant source of income for its entrepreneurs makes it a potential source of tax revenue for the mayor's office. However, *Jakarta* youth entrepreneurs resist taxation, causing various kinds of conflicts between them and the Karang mayor's office. Berry argues that:

In economic (as in other forms of human activity) people are continually engaged in efforts both to influence and to understand the circumstances under which they produce, invest, exchange, and consume goods and services. Producers, for example, seek to bring power to bear on acquiring and using the means of production, on gaining access to income and wealth, and on increasing (or maintaining) their capacity to produce or earn income in the future. They also think about what they are doing and what they are up against.³²⁹

Jakarta resistance to taxation has been motivated by the fact that most of the entrepreneurs are formerly un-employed youth whose economic frustrations led them to start *Jakarta* transport services. They consider the commune's tax agenda as exploitation from a commune, which failed to provide them with employment opportunities. In contrast, the commune, like the state, considers *Jakarta* transport as an opportunity abound that can satisfy the commune's extractive agenda. Thus, *Jakarta*-commune tensions typify the struggles of the postcolonial African state to control the "creativity of the margins" and the transnational flows that thrive through the borders of most African countries.³³⁰

Notwithstanding, the Karang commune was bent on enforcing its regulatory authority on the *Jakarta* sector. It set market entry rules, which made it compulsory for commercial *Jakartas* to register with the mayor's

³²⁹ Sara Berry, *No condition is permanent: the social dynamics of agrarian change in sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 13.

³³⁰ Veena Das and Deborah Poole, ed. *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*. (Santa Fe, Oxford: School of American Research Press, James Currey, 2004); Janet Roitman, *Fiscal Disobedience, Anthropology of Economic Regulation in Central Africa*. (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005).

office. To register, entrepreneurs provided the mayor's office with the following documents:

- A copy of their national identification card.
- The *sache* number, mark and product type of the *Jakarta*. This information was obtained from the manufacturers' manual, which comes with all new *Jakartas*.
- A 2000 CFA franc registration and processing fee

The local gendarmerie office processes part of the registration paperwork before the mayor's office confirms it by providing a registered *Jakarta* with a numbered plaque to affix on its back. This plaque, which cost 3000 CFA francs, differentiates commercial *Jakartas* from non-commercial ones.

The more contentious tax programme is the monthly payments *Jakartas* have to make to the mayor's office, after they start operations. In March 2013, there were around 250 registered commercial *Jakartas* in Karang. But records from the mayor's office indicated that only about 100 to 140 paid taxes regularly. Inevitably, the mayor's office has to pursue tax evaders for them to pay up their taxes. However, this leads to fights that undermine *Jakarta*-commune relations.

Renner has identified that social breaches are easily settled in Senegambia, but competition over resources endured.³³¹ The fight over taxation, which ensued between the *Jakarta* and the commune provides a good example of how economic competition can cause serious breaches in Senegambian relations. *Jakarta* entrepreneurs struggled with the commune to avoid losing part of their income to taxation.³³²

The mayor's office was adamant that tax defaulters must pay up their arrears. *Jakartas* contribute to the wear and tear of the roads like

³³¹ F. A. Renner, "Ethnic Affinity, Partition And Political Integration In Senegambia," in *Partitioned Africans, Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries 1884- 1984*, ed. A. I. Asiwaju (London/ Lagos: C. Hurst and Company/ University of Lagos Press, 1985), 73.

³³² This borrows Lonsdale's concept of the interface between the deep politics of society and the high politics of state, see John Lonsdale, " Political accountability in African history," in *Political Domination in Africa*, edited by Patrick Chabal, 126- 157 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

automobiles. They should therefore be taxed like the latter to pay for road maintenance costs, to recover the state's investments on roads and to offset their economic and social costs to the commune.³³³ The office further argued that: "People try to get satisfaction from their given resources. The government is like a person. It is an agent of society, responsible for providing public goods. It has to get resources to provide satisfactory conditions to society."³³⁴ Moreover, the *Jakartas* are notorious for frequent involvement in accidents. Drivers engage in "risky road practices" while driving their motorcycles in the commune. They cause serious liabilities to individuals and to the commune. Therefore, *Jakartas* are both a social and a political risk to the commune. They must show "*civism*" to their commune by paying for their cost of doing business in the commune.³³⁵ But *Jakarta* drivers' "*civism*" is with their communities, and not the commune.

They argued that the monthly tax the mayor's office levies on them was extortion and exploitation from a commune that fails to provide them with employment opportunities.³³⁶ Instead of the commune, their obligations lie with their poor families and underdeveloped communities, who survive from the income they make from their *Jakarta* entrepreneurship. In effect, their allegiance is with their social systems, which consist of their families, kinsfolk and other individuals they have social ties to, and not with the political system. Their differentiation of their social obligations from their political ones re-echoes Williams' observation that political loyalty to the state (in this case, the commune), can be morally arbitrary and non-binding for individuals.³³⁷

To some extent, we see *Jakarta* drivers use kinship affinities to justify their opposition to the commune's tax policies. This resonates with Berry's

³³³Interview with Oumar Low, Karang, Senegal, 27th February, 2013.

³³⁴ A.A. Walters, *The Economics Of Road User Charges* (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins Press, 1968), 105.

³³⁵Interview with Mayor Ousmane Sene, Karang, Senegal, 25th January, 2013.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷See John Williams, *The Ethics of Territorial Borders, Drawing Lines in the Shifting Sand* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2.

observation that economic struggles “can play out in terms of culturally specific debates over age and gender roles, kinship and community relations, and changing conceptualizations of people’s relations to the environment and one another.”³³⁸ *Jakarta* drivers assert that before giving money to the commune, they should give it to their families and communities, who deserve their money more. However, culture and kinship are subordinate to their economic goals. Majority of them reply on carving out their own “market power in order to protect themselves,” and their economic interests.³³⁹ But their focus on kinship indicates that in Senegambia, social systems can be beyond the reach of the state. Therefore, kinship discourses can endure even if they outlive their political and economic relevance (see chapters 1 & 2).

The mayor’s office considers the anti-taxation attitudes of *Jakartas* as “unpredictable and difficult to understand.”³⁴⁰ It recruits the gendarmerie office to adjudicate the tax crisis. At the end of each month, gendarmerie agents mount the commune’s highway and ask *Jakarta* drivers on the road to produce their receipt for that month’s tax payment. Defaulters are re-directed to the mayor’s office, located about 500 meters away from the gendarme complex.³⁴¹

The gendarmerie is a force with both police and military characteristics. Using their coercive powers to force *Jakarta* drivers to pay their tax to the commune implies the commune uses extra-judicial pressure and implicit dictatorial powers to enforce its authority on *Jakarta* drivers. This hardens the *Jakarta* opposition to taxation and intensifies commune- *Jakarta* driver tensions.³⁴²

The mayor’s office acknowledged that its plan B- tax collection-by-force was risky. It deepens commune-*Jakarta* confrontations. Also, the success of plan B was short-lived. Initially, gendarmes have to ask only a

³³⁸ Berry, *No condition is permanent...* 1993, 14.

³³⁹ *Ibid*, 11.

³⁴⁰ Interview with Mayor Ousmane Sene, Karang, Senegal, 25th January, 2013.

³⁴¹ Interview with Oumar Low, Karang, Senegal, 27th February, 2013.

³⁴² *Ibid*.

few *Jakartas* for their monthly receipts and those people inform their colleagues about the road check and the rest of them, would go and pay up, before they encounter the gendarmes. However, *Jakarta* drivers came up with counterstrategies to defeat monthly road enforcement checks.³⁴³ Some drivers withdraw from the market during anticipated road controls. Mostly, road checks last for a day or two since the gendarmes have more pressing duties than helping the commune mobilise its finances. After that, those who withdrew, return to the market with their *Jakartas*.

The mayor's office was trying to understand why less money was being recovered from gendarme road checks. It conducted random road controls and realised that tax defaulters use a counterstrategy against its taxation-by-force initiative. It also found out that some drivers evade tax for two or three months and that a number of *Jakartas* were "trying the market" with no commercial registration plaques.

Frustrated by its findings, the mayor's office adopted a non-coercive approach for its tax recovery initiative. It invited *Jakarta* drivers to a dialogue about taxes. This ended up being a back and forth political debate on taxation. The commune challenged drivers to honour their overdue tax payments. But the latter argued that the mayor's office should overwrite all tax arrears owed to it as bad debt. The commune insisted on recovering all tax arrears. Some *Jakarta* operators asked the commune to forgive all tax arrears. As neither of the two parties backed off from its position, *Jakarta* drivers resorted to "re-registering" their *Jakartas* on pretext that they were newly acquired.³⁴⁴

Newly acquired *Jakartas* start paying taxes from the day of their registration. Drivers use the same *sache* numbers they initially provided to the mayor's office, for the re-registration. Each *sache* number was unique to each *Jakarta*, but the fact that the numbers were very long and the office uses a manual accounting system made detecting re-registration cases difficult. With more pressing administrative duties waiting, the mayor's

³⁴³Interview with Mayor Ousmane Sene, Karang, Senegal, 25th January, 2013.

³⁴⁴ Interview with Mayor Ousmane Sene, Karang, Senegal, 25th January, 2013.

accountants found it tedious, monotonous and time consuming to go through a list of 250 *sache* numbers in order to verify the registration status of a particular *Jakarta*. To the delight of the operators, re-registration enabled *Jakartas* to make a fresh start on their tax payments and unilaterally write-off their arrears without the consent of the mayor's office. Due to lack of enough administrative capacity in a newly formed commune, the mayor's office could not improvise simple technologies to monitor the registration process. The drivers prevailed over the mayor's office.

The border aided the anti-taxation artifices of the *Jakartas*. Zeller argues that borders can erode the regulatory authority of the state since they provide opportunities for both illicit and licit trade.³⁴⁵ Cross-border socio-ethnic networks and interstate commercial networks can redefine state policies from below as "new forms of territoriality" challenge the "official limits, norms and language of the state."³⁴⁶ Consequently, *Jakarta* anti-taxation artifices bear the foot prints of how African informal economies, contraband trade and migratory movements aspire to restructure state systems on their own terms.³⁴⁷ Their ambitions validate the observation Das and Poole made, that African economic and social conditions work on their own terms.³⁴⁸ But this situation opens up various tensions in relations between the state and non-state actors like the *Jakarta* drivers.

The mayor's office reinforced its weak regulatory authority with the coercive might of the gendarme, which had both negative and positive outcomes. But using an outside resource like the gendarme to reinforce its taxation agenda is similar to how trans-national or cross-border networks use hybrid spaces to promote their economic and social agendas. It also relates to how Senegambian economic and socio-religious actors use

³⁴⁵ Wolfgang Zeller, "Neither arbitrary nor artificial: Chiefs and the making of the Namibia-Zambia borderland," *Journal of Borderland Studies*, (2010): 6-21.

³⁴⁶ Achille Mbembe, "At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality, and Sovereignty in Africa" (translated by Steven Randall), *Public Culture*, 12(1), (2012): 259-284; Achille Mbembe and Janet Roitman, "Figures of the subject in times of crisis," *Public Culture*, 7 (2) (1995): 323-352.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ Das and Poole, *Anthropology...* 2004.

different resources at their disposal to navigate the complex context of The Gambia-Senegal border.

The commune-*Jakarta* relations seemed to be largely confrontational, but there are bright sides to it. At the time of my fieldwork, the mayor's office's records showed that about 25 to 30 *Jakarta* drivers were consistently up to date with their tax payments. These drivers mostly reside in Karang and are family men and heads of households. Most of them are also at least thirty-five years old or more. Their relationship with the mayor's office can be juxtaposed with those of defaulters.

Drivers who habitually defaulted on their taxes are mostly unmarried youth, who come from neighbouring villages around Karang. They come to Karang in the mornings to work and in the evenings return to their villages. For them, if they pay taxes to the commune, it should in return provide development to their communities. Otherwise, they see little or no link between them and the commune. The development disparity between their villages and Karang, which has better infrastructure, justifies their resistance to taxation.³⁴⁹ But their refusal to pay their taxes impedes the development of their villages, as the commune needs money to fund its development initiatives.

The attitudes of *Jakarta* tax defaulters partly derive from their economic circumstances and their location within the state of Senegal. As a border town, Karang feels neglected and detached from Dakar. It has limited development opportunities and public goods in the commune are usually sub-standard when compared to those in Dakar and other Senegalese urban centers. Tax defaulters therefore have reasons for being dissatisfied with conditions in their communities.

Studying youth in Britain, Furlong and Cartmel discovered that “[I]n communities characterised by high unemployment and urban decline, some young people may develop an awareness that the group to which they

³⁴⁹A discussion with Saihou, *Jakarta* driver, Karang, 2nd March, 2013.

belong has been unfairly disadvantaged.”³⁵⁰ Similarly, youth in the *Jakarta* sector feel the need to reconceptualise their relationship with the commune and challenge what they considered inappropriate policies of the commune.³⁵¹ The tax conflict between the two entities also exemplifies how economic concerns override cultural sensibilities in Senegambia. They also highlight to what extent economic innovations may alter people’s adherence to cultural values. *Jakarta* entrepreneurship undermined social values, but it brought new experiences to the border.

Commune-*Jakarta* relations are both confrontational and cooperative like The Gambia-Senegal interstate relations (see chapters 1, 2 & 3). Hence, the two entities sometimes cooperate to advance their mutual interests. The mayor’s office supported *Jakarta* drivers to set up an association, which serves as a platform for protecting their interests in the commune. Elected representatives run the association, which now mobilises, expresses and channels its members’ concerns to local authorities in the commune. It is also a lobbying front for members. For example, at one point, the mayor’s office increased the monthly subscription fee for *Jakarta* drivers to 2500 CFA francs. The association lobbied for it to be reduced to 2000 CFA francs. But the mayor’s office insisted on the new fee.

The association unilaterally increased the fare for *Jakarta* rides, to protest this fee increment. This strategy resonates with how members of the Senegalese Transport Association protest ferry fare increases. The mayor’s office’s response to this situation was also similar to the ways Gambian authorities react to transporter fee protests. For example, anytime transporters closed the border, Gambian authorities negotiate with them to end the stalemate. Similarly, the mayor’s office invited *Jakarta* drivers and negotiated with them to drop their unilateral fare increase. In return, the fee was reduced in the following fiscal year. But this did not resolve the impasse on the payment of the monthly subscription.

³⁵⁰ Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel, *Young People and Social Change, Individualization and Risk in Late Modernity* (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1997), 105.

³⁵¹ On the process of social change and re-conceptualisation of social processes see Berry, *No condition is permanent...* 1993.

As the tax dispute evolved, the mayor's office employed other strategies to convince *Jakarta* drivers that the commune was a partner and not an adversary to them. It helped them adopt a common fare mechanism, which discouraged the free-floating fare system that existed in the *Jakarta* transport sector. Before the common fare system was introduced, fare prices were flexible. *Jakarta* operators fiercely competed against one another for passengers at their roadside "depots." Drivers offered passengers different fare prices for the same ride to undercut competitors. A passenger could pay 300 CFA francs for a ride another driver charged at 500 CFA francs. This transactional practice contributed to conflicts within the sector and with state and non-state actors affected by it. To the credit of the mayor's office, the *Jakarta* sector is better organised now and it has a predictable fare policy. It brings more profit to drivers and minimises harmful interpersonal competition in the sector. The development of the fare policy is relevant for securitisation of market entry and the implementation of commune *Jakarta* tax policies.

The commune-*Jakarta* relations are complex. But they exemplify how changes in social processes and economic structures can have different outcomes for society. Additionally, they show how conflict and cooperation can simultaneously exist in the same relationship. This embodies the nuanced nature of state society relations. Noticeably, the political economy of the border keeps evolving, as new economic structures grow and expand, old ones may be modified. This makes the border a dynamic site for economic and social relations. In the next section, I use an incident I've witnessed to explore other forms of conflict the *Jakarta* created in the restructured cross-border transport sector.

5.1.3: Demand for Jakarta Services and Jakarta-Society Relations

Gamoos and *ziarres* are usually high peak travel periods at the Amdallai-Karang border. Huge numbers of people cross from The Gambia into Senegal, to attend these religious events held at various religious communities. In January 2013, I witnessed *Jakarta* drivers increase their fares unilaterally to cash in from the high demand for border transport services during these annual religious events. The day in question was the day for the official opening of the *gamoo* in Sirmang.

Sirmang is a border village in Senegal and home to Ma Ansou Niang, the popular, grand and revered marabout, religious leader and scholar. Ma Ansou received part of his religious education in The Gambia. He has many *talibeos* on both sides of the border and government officials from both The Gambia and Senegal attend *gamoo* proceedings at his home.

It is the day for the official opening of the January 2013 *gamoo*. I am sitting on a bench on a veranda of a shop in Karang, waiting for a car ride to Sirmang where Senegalese government regional representatives are participating in the official opening of the *gamoo*. An eighteen-year-old girl shared the bench I sat on. She engaged me in a conversation about how *Jakartas* exploit passengers. Part of the conversation is reproduced below:

Girl: “Are you going to Sirmang?”

MK: “Yes. But I am waiting for a ride with some people. What about you?”

Girl: “I am going to our village. It is after Sirmang. But the Jakarta drivers have gone crazy again. They say the fare is mille deux cent (1200 CFA francs). Earlier, they said it was sept cent (700 CFA francs). They are crazy. They always do this when passengers are many.”

MK: “How much is the regular fare?”

Girl: “Cinq cent (500).”

The ambiguous fare policy the girl reported here resonates with, how commercial networks take advantage of complementariness between areas of production, especially borders and monetary zones, that differ from one country to another, to create markets that elude the state.³⁵² In this case, the *Jakartas* capitalise on Senegambian habits for cross-border social and religious outreach to advance their economic goals (see chapters 1, 2, 3 & 7). When I asked the mayor Ousmane Sene about his views on the exploitative nature of *Jakarta* unilateral fare increases during peak demand periods, he explained that:

Problems relating to Jakarta unilateral fare increases during high-peak travel events like *gamoos* happen in the automobile sector, too. You can see this in the news. The problem arises out of a lack of *civism*. A moral check on transporters should be that the people they are making illegal profits from, are going to seek God. As transporters, they too can seek God by keeping fare rates at their authorised rates.³⁵³

The mayor's moral reasoning eludes *Jakarta* drivers and transporters, who exploit passengers during high demand periods for transport services. It shares the moral values of the girl I conversed with. For her, it is also about bad conduct during peak demand periods. However, the opinion of both people indicate that the transport sector operate with shared practices, values and attitudes. We can also infer that society tacitly endorses exploitation from transporters (see chapter 3 & 4). This arises from the fact that the demand for transport services is inelastic.

From the point of view of passengers, transporters enjoy social power as "controllers" of mobility in society. Their monopoly over public transportation means they have power to challenge both state and society. People must move from one place to another and their mobility largely depends on transport services, which have become indispensable to society. Transporters use their social power to justify their fare increments. For example, *Jakarta* drivers argued that their fare increases were legitimate. During high demand times, the traffic flows towards one direction,

³⁵² Mbembe, "At the Edge of the World..." (2012): 262.

³⁵³ Interview with Mayor Ousmane Sene, Karang, Senegal, 25th January 2013.

like during the Sirmang *gamoo* when many passengers crossed from The Gambia into Senegal. The number of passengers who cross from Senegal to The Gambia, at that time, were very few. Drivers who bring passengers into Senegal have to wait for a longer time before they can get passengers heading towards the Gambian side of the border. Instead of the long wait to make the return trip, drivers opt to return to the border sooner, to get other passengers from the direction that generated the immense traffic flow. Like most transporters, *Jakarta* drivers also consider unsold passenger space and long wait times for passengers as wasteful. As such, they charge more money for their fares, per trip, in order to recoup the monies they lost from the unsold passenger seats for their return trips.³⁵⁴ This reasoning has economic sense. It depicts how transporters use creativity and contingency to enhance and protect their economic interests. But in this case, their creativity violates social expectations.

Senegambians tend to adopt strategic patience towards exploitative individuals. They believe that a Supreme Being of truth and justice (God, Yallah or Allah) will protect their rights that are willfully violated by an oppressive or exploitative person. The mayor's use of secular principles of citizenship and religious ethics of good conduct to argue his views on the issue reveal another dimension of the practice in which state and non-state actors creatively use cultural, social, religious or political ideas to navigate complex relations. The practice of unilateral fare increases generates religious, economic and political debates in society. It helps us to understand how people creatively respond to different situations. It also highlights the complex nature of social, economic and political relations in society and at the border. However, it validates the argument that economic interests can re-define social, cultural and religious ones in society, even if temporarily.

The political economy of the border shapes the different kinds of relationships that exist at the border and beyond. The border has multiple functions and it means different things to different people. As such, it is a

³⁵⁴A discussion with Kane, *Jakarta* driver, Karang, Senegal, 28th February, 2013.

fertile space within which conflict and cooperation can co-exist. The *Jakarta* drivers' unethical fare increases constitute misdemeanor acts, however, they lead to debates about different understandings of *Jakarta*-commune and *Jakarta*-society relations. In the next section, we discuss how the commune of Karang tried to control transporters and how transporters resisted the commune's attempt to control them, leading to struggles and tensions in the commune and across the border.

5.1:4: Securing Road Practices and Communities: Accidents and the Cost of Jakarta Road use in Karang

The mayor's office's attempt to use its regulatory authority (through taxation) to control *Jakartas* was almost a fiasco. But when it found out that monthly, *Jakartas* cause at least four to five road accidents in the commune, it saw another opportunity to exert its authority on them. These accidents include people falling off from a running *Jakarta*, two *Jakartas* colliding, a car colliding with/hitting a *Jakarta*, or, a *Jakarta* knocking over a child in the community. The outcomes of these accidents range from serious bodily injuries, deep bruises and fractures and sometimes fatalities. Mostly, negative road practices among drivers cause these accidents. Since the accidents are avoidable, the mayor's office sought ways to make *Jakartas* responsible for their reckless road practices.

Some observers argued that the high prevalence of accidents in the *Jakarta* sector has to do with the age of the drivers. Drivers are mostly male youth between the ages of 20-30 years. They get 'intoxicated' by the freedom of the road and over-speed on the roads.³⁵⁵ Sometimes, they drive under the influence of cannabis or some other intoxicants. So, drivers generally expose the commune to some form of risk in their driving.

Studies of motorcycle transport in Northern Ghana and in Britain resonate with the mayor's findings that youth drivers are more susceptible to causing accidents. The two studies identified that risky behaviour causes

³⁵⁵ Interview with Mayor Ousmane Sene, Karang, Senegal, 25th January 2013.

high rates of accidents among youth motorcycle riders in Ghana and Britain, causing public health, personal and economic hazards in society.³⁵⁶

Jakarta drivers can be categorised based on their potential to cause accidents. It emerged that drivers who honoured their tax obligations are almost an accident-free category. Overall, the accident-free drivers comprise only about 10% of the number of *Jakarta* drivers in Karang. The types of accidents this group involves in are usually minor ones, such as, the driver falling from his *Jakarta*. These accidents hardly involve second, or, third parties, according to the mayor's office.³⁵⁷ On the other hand, 90% of drivers can potentially cause accidents in the commune.

The Gendarmerie did a situational analysis of the transport sector in Karang. We discovered that in 30 accidents, only one is not caused by a *Jakarta*. We had to call the *Jakarta* drivers to sensitise them on safe driving. If you ask them to stop using their *Jakartas*, the first response they will throw at you will be, you have stopped me from my work, now give me another work. This can be another challenge for us. The *Jakartas* help us by creating employment for actors in the sector. But again, the risk factors are present.³⁵⁸

The high propensity for accidents gives the commune another opportunity to put its mouth in the business of *Jakarta* drivers. But this time, the mayor's office is resolute that it would avoid confrontations with *Jakartas*. It invited them to a meeting to discuss the economic benefits *Jakartas* bring to families and the commune, their road practices and accident hazards in the sector. This meeting was also designed to introduce a new policy on road practices, which was formulated by the mayor's office in consultation with the gendarmerie. It required *Jakarta* drivers and the passengers they carry to wear safety helmets, which would be provided by drivers.

Drivers opposed the policy on grounds that it would bring further economic hardship to a people struggling for survival and to a community where poverty and youth unemployment were deep-rooted. They threatened that if they were forced to provide helmets, they would increase fares, to

³⁵⁶ See M. Kudebong, *et al.*, "Economic Burden of Motorcycle Accidents in Northern Ghana," *Ghana Medical Journal*, (December 2011): 1-9. Also see D. R. Rutter, Lyn Quine and Ian P. Albery, "Perception of Risk in Motor Cyclists: Unrealistic optimism, relative realism and prediction of behaviour," *British Journal of Psychology* 89 (1998): 681-696.

³⁵⁷ Interview with Mayor Ousmane Sene, Karang, Senegal, 25th January, 2013.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

recover the cost of the helmets. The authorities dropped the policy. *Jakarta* drivers' victory against commune authorities further reinforced the growing power transporters enjoy over state authorities and the border.

Jakartas became another invincible actor in the cross-border transport economy and tested the limits of the commune's authority. The commune's fickle ability to effectively regulate them within its territory encouraged them to expand their entrepreneurial adventure across the border in The Gambia. But Gambian authorities were determined to exercise full control over what *Jakartas* can do or not do within their border communities. Unlike the commune, Gambian authorities were firm with their regulatory policies for *Jakartas*, as they try to protect border communities that accuse *Jakartas* of causing economic and social havoc in their communities. They came up with a no-*Jakarta* policy that completely outlawed *Jakartas* in all Gambian territories. The commune-*Jakarta* tensions spilled over to the border. The Gambia-*Jakarta* tension was multidimensional and included different parties. In the next section, we explore how this tension manifested at both commune and cross-border levels in Senegambia.

5.1.5: Rivalries Among Intermediate Transport and Their Local and Cross-Border Effects

Prior to the coming of the *Jakarta*, donkey and horse carts transfer passengers from the border to motor parks at the Karang-Amdallai border. They safely socialise the road with automobile transport. After the *Jakartas* came, carts, cars and motorcycles- share the road, causing congestion on the roads.

Commune authorities drew up a new plan for road use on *route nationale No. 5*, to decongest the road and to avoid road accidents.³⁵⁹ This new plan gave *Jakartas* priority road use over carts, and asked the latter to use the unpaved back roads of the town leading to the border. It made it

³⁵⁹ Interview with Mayor Ousmane Sene, Karang, Senegal, 25th January 2013.

illegal for carts to ride on *route nationale No.5*, stretching from Karang's main motor park to Amdallai. The strategy decongested the road. But it fueled intermodal rivalries and tensions in the border transport market.

Cart drivers found allies in the *clando* drivers, who opposed the commercial use of the *Jakarta* as border transport. Together, cart and *clando* drivers launched a campaign against the decision to give *Jakartas* priority road use. They argued that the carts were traditional border transport. Therefore, it was wrong for the *Jakarta*, the most recent mode to arrive in the commune, to displace them from the road.³⁶⁰

This started an open rivalry between *Jakartas*, carts and *clandos*. During my fieldwork, I witnessed the three modes of transport aggressively compete to lure passengers from each other at their makeshift waiting areas by the border. Cart drivers tell passengers that using carts mean getting value money. Carts are cheap, safe and reliable. *Clando* drivers also try to lure passengers away from *Jakartas*. They remind them of how unsafe and expensive *Jakartas* are. In return, *Jakarta* drivers taunt carts and *clandos*. They sneer to passengers that the *Jakarta* was the fastest of all these modes and they are no match for carts and *clandos*. The *Jakarta* is a flexible, quick transport that can take a passenger to any destination.

The tense intermodal competition among intermediate border transport adds another layer to the border transport conflicts. However, each mode serves different passengers or travelers at the border. People looking to travel cheap and who carry substantial luggage, can take carts. People, who are concerned with safety, can take a cart or a *clando*. People, who want to get to their destination quickly, have a *Jakarta* available. So, in fact, each transport serves the needs of a particular group of clients, but this reality is lost in the crazy maze of rivalries. The unnecessary tension intermodal rivalries breed for border transport is similar to the unnecessary rivalries between The Gambia and Senegal. Both countries refuse to see that cooperatively sharing an economic space can yield mutual benefits,

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

especially, if they specialise in their economic activities based on their national strengths (see chapters 1, 2, 3 & 6). But instead, and like the *clandos*, carts and *Jakartas*, the pressure of their rivalries weakens their strengths.

The *Jakarta* tackles intermodal rivalries at the border. But some border communities are unhappy about *its* deep and successful penetration of their communities. They alleged that *Jakartas* aid theft and other criminal behaviour in their communities. They also alleged that drivers are involved in “snatch and run” stealing of livestock in many border communities. Stolen livestock was allegedly sold at Karang’s burgeoning roast meat market. As a result of these and other allegations, the *Jakarta* has become synonymous to stealing in some communities. This view is so strong and pervasive that when some border villages hear the sound of a *Jakarta* near their villages, they stand on guard to protect their livestock.

Some Gambian border villages appealed to their government to protect them from *Jakartas*. Consequently, Gambian authorities outlawed *Jakartas* in all their communities at the Karang-Amdallai and Farrafenni-Keur Ayib borders. This drew ill-feeling from *Jakarta* drivers who condemned Gambian authorities for their un-cooperative stance. The conflict between the *Jakartas* and the border communities has been between two local entities. However, The Gambia’s intervention in the conflict makes it a party to the conflict. The Gambia government-*Jakarta* tensions expand to include the Senegalese state, which considers *Jakartas* an innovative entrepreneurial initiative from unemployed Senegalese youth. Senegalese authorities were not happy with The Gambia’s decision to outlaw *Jakartas*, but the latter maintained its stance. To understand to what extent the *Jakarta* issue chilled interstate relations, it is important to identify the roles the sector plays in relieving youth unemployment in Senegal.

As rightly reported by the mayor’s office, the *Jakarta* sector provides significant opportunities for youth employment in Senegalese border

communities.³⁶¹ Today, actors in the sector include out-of school youth and youth who have completed their Advanced Level Certificates (BAC). It also employs some university graduates with Bachelor's Degrees. Additionally, it employs second or third year university students, who take a break from school or come during the school holidays, to make money in the sector. With increasing levels of youth un-employment in Senegal, the *Jakarta* sector is a huge help to the Senegalese economy. It creates livelihood opportunities for many youths. It is therefore understandable that Senegal frowns on The Gambia's anti-*Jakarta* policies, which curtail economic opportunities for the sector. Notwithstanding, national security concerns justifies the Gambian position on the *Jakartas*.

In effect, the *Jakarta* is a source of conflict for the commune and for interstate relations. It tests the mettle of both state and non-state authorities at the border and beyond. The *Jakarta* adds interesting dynamics to the cross-border transport sector. It reinforces the border's role as a space for mix-motive games. It embodies how ideas for survival can be shared and explored across distances and mindsets. Most of the drivers are youth. They belong to a social category that is highly predisposed to migration. Through cyber technology, they can closely follow developments in other parts of world. They can also follow existing practices in motorcycle transport from other countries like Burkina Faso and Nigeria.³⁶²

As a social category that has a tendency to explore advancements in other parts of the world, these youth drivers may nurture liberal political and cultural perceptions, which would impact the way they perceive the border, their economic challenges and their political leaders. Their intransigent attitude towards the mayor's office and its policies was driven by a sense of empowered entitlement.

³⁶¹Interview with Mayor Ousmane Sene, Karang, Senegal, 25th January 2013.

³⁶² See Rene Bendit and Marina Hahn- Bleibtreu, ed., *Youth Transitions, Processes of Social Inclusion and Patterns of Vulnerability in a Globalised World* (Opladen and Farmington Hills: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2008).

These youth view their economic realities in ways that resonate with the experiences of disempowered youth in other African circumstances. For instance, the *vous* in Karang have been the incubatory site for the rise of *Jakarta* entrepreneurship at the border. This is parallel to how barbershops in Arusha, Tanzania, have become synonymous to the economic struggles of youth in Tanzania.

As a site of business, the barbershop milieu bespeaks both the social crisis of neo-liberal transition in Tanzania...as well as the *meanings* of these institutional shifts and the kinds of consciousness embedded in them that is the pervasive sense of rupture, and especially of unrealized expectations.³⁶³

Sites for popular culture, work places, public places like *vous* and barbershops, are ideal spots from which youth can reconceptualise their social realities, dreams and ideals for economic emancipation. The *Jakartas* serve as tools for economic emancipation for youth in border locations like Karang, or, in big cities like Lagos, Nigeria, where Okada, the Nigerian version of *Jakarta*, long operated as a form of commercial transport.³⁶⁴

The *Jakarta* drivers have learnt from both local and trans-national sources. Their impersonal tendencies mimic the transactional behaviour automobile transporters adopted in their campaign for changes in cross-border transport. They tend to be more interested in advancing their economic goals, rather than preserving inter-personal relations. Perhaps, the fact that majority of *Jakarta* drivers are youth can make us understand why they talk little about culture or even cultural norms of cooperation in their dialogues with other parties. There are other studies in other parts of the world that show that youth tend to be more transactional in their interactions with other people.

Quoting Abrams on youth, labour market and political action, Furlong and Cartmel argued that impersonal tendencies in youth interpersonal

³⁶³ Brad Weiss, "The Barber in Pain, Consciousness, Affliction and Alterity in Urban East Africa," in *Makers and Breakers, Children and Youth in Postcolonial Africa*, ed. Alcinda Honwana and Filip De Boeck (Oxford, Trenton, Dakar: James Currey, Africa World Press, Codesria, 2005), 107.

³⁶⁴ Oluranti I. Ogunrinola, "Global Economic Crisis and Career Aspirations among "Okada" Riders in Nigeria: The Influence of Apprenticeship Skills Training," *Business and Economic Research Journal* 2, 3 (2011).

exchanges are linked to the fact that “...current trends in education and the labour market may actually have weakened the potential for collectivism by strengthening individualist sentiments”³⁶⁵ This shows how the obsession for economic security created barriers for social solidarity. Neagele also observes that in American culture, the search for security among youth condones moving away from “personal intensities in order to keep us sober and free enough for impersonal accomplishments.”³⁶⁶ *Jakarta* drivers therefore reflect what other youth in similar circumstances may do. Through the various ways they express their economic, social and political ideals, they contribute to social progress and change.

The main lessons to draw from the Jakarta case study are that tensions can have both productive and non-productive outcomes in society. Change can bring about new economic opportunities in society. Additionally, both state and non-state actors in Senegambia use different resources at their disposal to navigate the complex context of the border and their relationships. In the next section, I use the media and civil society groups to further show that both state and non-state actors can generate economic and other benefits from The Gambia-Senegal interstate conflicts. Thus, conflict in itself is not bad, except when it is associated with violence, which ends up causing harm to almost all involved parties.

5.2: Mediating the Fight: The Media and Citizens

The case study on the *Jakartas*, reveals that the mayor of Karang borrows from secular and popular terminologies, to communicate his ideas, to elicit some desired responses from his audience. As a politician, he uses words like “*civism*,” to describe his understanding or lack of understanding of the attitudes of the *Jakarta* drivers. As a social and religious being, he uses words like “God,” to support his statements, too. His approach to communicating his ideas is part of the broad use of language to (re) create

³⁶⁵ Furlong and Cartmel, *Young People...*1997, 105.

³⁶⁶ Kaspar D. Naegle, “Youth and Society, Some Observations,” in *Youth: Change and Challenge*, ed. Erik H. Erikson (New York, London: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1963), 60.

and (re) enact social experiences of the border, the one-ness discourse and interstate relations in Senegambia. The instrumental use of language also features in the way local media engages with The Gambia-Senegal relations. This section therefore examines the roles the media plays in interstate relations and how it directly or indirectly benefits from interstate tensions.

Language is a major tool for the print media. It makes the media a “channel through which alternative views, symbols, and meanings are expressed.” It also enables it to “frame issues for the public.” The media also serves as “an arena in which groups struggle over the definition and construction of social reality.”³⁶⁷ Going by these roles of the media, it is clear that it can shape debates on interstate and cross-border relations in Senegambia. Their role in this regard continues to evolve. In chapter one, the media features as a tool for pro-Senegambia advocacy. In the chapters that follow, it takes on a role as a social enquirer that tries to understand what is happening between The Gambia and Senegal. We also see it as a medium for spreading the viewpoints of transporters during interstate border conflicts. In this chapter, it acts as a political instrument and a nationalist medium that pursues what it considers to be the national interest.

These shifting roles of the media are tied to the logic that shapes its debates at any given moment. As such, the way the media uses language can determine the effects that language has on interstate relations. For example, during one of the border closures, Gambia-based *Foroyaa* newspaper published dramatic details of the truckload of goods that were stranded at the borders and the millions businesses were losing as a result of the border crisis. It urged for a healthy “people to people, state to state and state to people relation to ensure the two states, one people principle.”³⁶⁸ It reported the events as they were, but it also shared its views on how the border impasse should be resolved. Its use of language can be compared

³⁶⁷ Susan Eckstein, ed., *Power and Popular Protest, Latin American Social Movements*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1989), 35.

³⁶⁸ “The Business Community Laments Over Unofficial Border Closure to Vehicles,” Editorial *Foroyaa*, May 4-5 May, 2011, 1.

with that of other media groups, as examples of how social reality is constructed and re-constructed and thus, like the kinship discourses, it can be subject to various shifts.

The media's role can be constructive, neutral or partisan. Its coverage of the 2014-border stalemate is an instructive example. A number of local Senegalese media outlets entirely blamed The Gambia's President Jammeh, for the 2014 border crisis. Their views ignored the complex nature of the crisis. In subsequent border crisis, other Senegalese media sources also maintained a similar line of thinking about the border crisis. "The Kouthia show," a Senegalese TFM television comedy, parodied Jammeh on the crisis and gave the impression that Youssou Ndour, TFM founder and the *mbalax* superstar, prevailed on Jammeh to reopen the border.³⁶⁹

The Kouthia show is a comedy show and nothing to take seriously. However, it seems to use the border crisis as a publicity stunt for Ndour, who has political ambition in Senegal and whose family has business interests in The Gambia. There was no evidence that the border was re-opened as a result of Ndour's intervention. It's comedy, but there is no guarantee that some viewers will not consider it as reality.

The show ignored serious sensitivities of the border. But its mindset features in other media sources. For example, Gambian dissidents in the USA and Europe used online media to urge Senegal to militarily intervene in The Gambia to end the border crisis and the regime of President Jammeh.³⁷⁰ Their advocacy was incite-ful for interstate relations and it ignored the democratic ideals that modern society values as the bases for regime change in any country.

The personal logic and interests of the people behind them motivated these media productions or publications. The editorial stance of recent

³⁶⁹ "Jammeh's Double Explained Border Closure," *Kibaaro*, Wednesday, April 30 2014. Accessed Wednesday, April 30 2014, <http://kibaaro.com/jammehs-double-explained-border-closure/>.

³⁷⁰ "Senegal/Gambia Border Closure is an Act of Economic Sabotage and Incompetent Leadership," Editorial, *Gainako*, April 28 2014. Accessed April 30 2014, <http://gainako.com/?p=4984>.

media reports reflect the vested interests some contributors to the media and some media personnel have in The Gambia-Senegal relations. For example, a Gambian protester wrote to the *Standard* newspaper about the 2014 border blockade by Senegalese transporters, noting:

Senegal cannot be allowed to play the bully and get away with it. The frequent border closures they orchestrate does not augur well for good neighbourliness...Where on earth can one man – the leader of a transport union – open and close an important international border whenever he likes it and reopen it when he likes it?... Macky Sall and his people should man up and take up their responsibilities or stop hiding behind the so-called transport union in their diabolical attempts to wreak havoc on the Gambian economy and make the people suffer. The problem can never be solved by the Gambian and Senegalese transport people, but rather by the two governments sitting in one room at one table and sorting out whatever is the problem. ...Senegal should know that if it wants to hurt The Gambia, it will end up hurting its own people more. Senegal needs The Gambia than The Gambia needs Senegal.³⁷¹

The writer of the article used language in an interesting way that provides insights into the border crisis but also some strong nationalist views of it. He calls Senegal a “bully.” That infers The Gambia was weak and it was the innocent party in this crisis. This directly validates conspiracy theories that Senegal was using the border and its transporters for its anti-Gambia campaign. The writer raises a legitimate question about who is in control of the border. Senegal? Transporters? He concludes that it is only the two governments that can resolve the border problem. He ends his analysis with a quack that Senegal needs The Gambia more. This article directly feeds into other editorials from the *Standard* newspaper, which published this article.

In an editorial, the *Standard* newspaper contributed to the debates on 2014-border crisis. Its views reflected a nationalist’s unrestrained candor. It wrote:

³⁷¹Sulayman Fatty, “Re: Gambia-Senegal Border Closure,” *The Standard Newspaper*, April 28, 2014. Accessed April 30, 2014, <http://standard.gm/site/letters/3485-Gambia-Senegal-border-closure.html>.

Since the period of early independence during the era of Senghor, Senegal has been playing the diabolical game of closing the border with The Gambia citing all kinds of justifications. Well aware of the importance of the re-export trade to the Gambian economy, they have used border closures and the threat of border closures to 'punish' us... of recent, the closures have not only become more common, but the periods of closures have become inordinately long and they are unilaterally dictated by the Senegalese transport union... it defies all reason that they can repeatedly close important transit borders continually without their government lifting a finger to do anything about it... We understand the reasons that influenced the decision the Gambia government took last week when it closed the border... It shows that The Gambia too can play ball. If anything, it would only strengthen our hands in any future negotiations. The border closures only result in mutually assured losses. No one wins.... It should also be realised that actions such as the perennial arbitrary closures of international borders do not just hurt governments but the ... people and they would only generate hate and other ill feelings in the populace. The Gambia and Senegal are tied by tradition and kinship. If anything was going to strengthen our relationships, it should be a sense of defiance against borders that were created by colonialists...The government of Senegal should put an end to this madness...³⁷²

The *Standard* newspaper also uses interesting language to describe its impressions of the meanings of the frequent border closures. It describes it as "madness" from Senegal, "a diabolical game" to "punish us," (Gambians). It applauds The Gambia for showing that it too "can play ball." The editorial was no doubt a pro-Gambian struggle against Senegal's frequent closing of the border on the country. But it directly feeds into the intense communications Gambian authorities have made on the border closures. Interestingly, Sheriff Bojang, the founder of *Standard* newspaper, would become a Minister for Information and Communication in the Jammeh government. (This is not to say he was appointed due to this editorial, Bojang was competent and qualified for this position). The editorial also served another purpose- the pro-Senegambia debate. It dwells on the colonial legacy and the effects the partition has had on Senegambia. It argues, "The Gambia and Senegal are tied by tradition and kinship." If

³⁷²"Senegal and the Politricks of Border Closures," Editorial, *Standard Newspaper*, April 28, 2014. Accessed April 30, 2014, <http://standard.gm/site/editorial/3486-Senegal-and-the-politricks-border-closures.html>.

anything was going to strengthen our relationships, it should be a sense of defiance against borders that were created by colonialists...”

The editorial was an eloquent exposition on the border crisis. It borrowed the Senegambian practice of using metaphors and idioms to construct and re-construct social experiences. It concludes that no one wins in the border crisis. But the game metaphor it uses implies there is a loser and a winner and that can potentially aggravate the interstate tension as both parties struggle not to be the loser. Hence, that statement deviates from *dome-ndeye* sentiments, and fosters a *dome-baaye* approach to the crisis. The use of the word “madness” expresses a sense of exasperation, a lack of reasonableness. The use of a mental health metaphor therefore dismisses the crisis as fictitious and unnatural.

The editorial comes from a well-informed source; therefore it can also serve as a Gambian response to Senegalese stereotypes. For instance, some Senegalese have a social perception that Gambians are “*cohn*.” In Wollof, that means someone who can be easily swindled or a fool. This comes from previous juvenile understandings of how the Senegambia Confederation was a struggle for political supremacy between Diouf and Jawara, Senegal and The Gambia. When it was formed, such views saw that “wise-man” Diouf fooled Jawara, and established the Confederation. However, when it collapsed some of these views changed to say in fact it was Jawara who outsmarted Diouf in the Confederation. These views are based on hierarchical understanding of interstate relations and are to be considered as part of insignificant social chitchat.

However, the metaphors the editorial uses connect with Senegambian social stereotypes. In fact, the word “bully” is also connected to these stereotypes. These words contradict Senegambian kinship discourses and the one-ness value. But we can also see them as part of human perceptions that some members of a tribe can have about other tribes, or, some citizens of a country can have about other countries and so on. They may not represent the dominant view of society, or they may not be

the truth about those particular people or tribe, but such views do exist in society. In the Senegambia case, they are part of the variety of perceptions that shape different understandings of interstate relations.

Following the border crisis, another Gambian Abdoukarim Sanneh published a long article on the Trans Gambia bridge project advancing both political and ecological perspectives on the project. He argued among other things that,

Now that the government of Gambia has yielded to the pressure from Senegal and agreed to sign the bridge development project, what are we to gain and lose? We should take a nationalist stand as an independent and sovereign state since we have seen the attitude of successive Senegalese governments. More should be done to inform our citizens about the issues. A year ago, Senegalese transport union were boycotting the ferry crossing in protest for the new tax levy and that should not be a deal for the construction of the bridge project. Our government should also be aware that Bambatenda ferry crossing is an important revenue arm of our small economy and so requires cost and benefit analysis. In building a bridge, that revenue-generating venue should be maintained...The government of the Gambia should introduce a form of toll charges, if the bridge project is financed through a development loan from donor institutions... The bridge in Bambatenda ferry crossing should be built in such a way that will not prevent or constraint or serve as a barrier for future river transportation.³⁷³

Sanneh's educated opinion on interstate relations and the Trans Gambia bridge project has similarities with the *Standard* newspaper editorial. It is pro-Gambian and it advocates for the protection of Gambian interests in interstate relations. However, it recognises the need for interstate cooperation, like the *Standard* newspaper's editorial.

We can identify three strands of arguments about interstate relations based on viewpoints expressed in the media or by the media. The first one is based on conscious nationalism, which aims to naturally protect the interests of either The Gambia or Senegal, depending on which direction of the border those views come from. The second one is cooperative

³⁷³ Abdoukarim Sanneh, "Trans-Gambia Bridge Project and Remaining Political Ecology Issues of Gambian River Basin Development," *Kibaaro Newspaper*, June 2, 2014. Accessed June 2, 2014, <http://kibaaro.com/trans-gambia-bridge-project-and-remaining-political-ecology-issues-of-gambia-river-basin-development/>.

nationalism, which recognises the need for interstate cooperation and the third one is inciteful nationalism, which aims to pit the two countries against each other.

These three variations of interstate discourse share the ability to structure personal thoughts or private grievances into collective thoughts or grievances. Using the media to express opinions on interstate relations can therefore shape the direction interstate relations take.

The logic of the media's work on interstate relations comes from what it is seeking to achieve. The media collects and publicises information and facilitates public communication. The way it uses this power can also define the nature of The Gambia-Senegal interstate relations. But again, what goals it seeks to achieve defines how it uses its power.

Politicians in both The Gambia and Senegal recognise the power the media has to influence the direction of interstate relations. For example, in 2014, as The Gambia-Senegal border stalemate raged on, it was rumoured that the Senegalese government had asked *Seneweb*, the popular Senegalese website, to pull a story on the border crisis off from their website. The story was considered damaging to interstate relations. But besides stories like that one, the media has also published information to indicate that The Gambia – Senegal border crisis are fictitious and are engineered by politicians who are in fact working for each other.

Based on this conspiracy theory, the media, at some point, alleged that, General Pathe Seck, former Senegalese Interior Minister, and some top Senegalese government officials have been spying on Gambian political exiles living in Dakar and other places in Senegal. They collect information about them and pass it to President Jammeh and his government. Reports also alleged that these Senegalese officials and security agents were involved in the abduction of Gambian dissidents, who went missing in Senegal. They were also accused of being behind the poisoning of some

political refugees who mysteriously died in Dakar.³⁷⁴ The media also claimed that these senior Senegalese government officials were on president Jammeh's payroll since the time of the Wade regime.

The language the media uses to report on stories, which it believes are part of interstate conspiracy depicts the media to be “for the people,” and against “dishonest politicians,” who have neither the interest of Senegambia nor that of their respective countries at heart. This can be framed as a struggle between the media and politicians in both The Gambia and Senegal. However, the struggle helps build the media’s image as the watchdog of the people. So, the interstate conflicts of the border can strengthen the media’s image.

Politicians are reluctant to openly speak about The Gambia-Senegal interstate conflicts. But the media does it and consequently, it passes itself as the more transparent entity, when compared with Senegambian politicians. The media’s provocative discussions of interstate relations allude to the complex nature of interstate relations. For example, political insiders have said that Wade and Jammeh and later Jammeh and Sall had low opinion of each other. But the media claims that Senegalese government officials, the gendarmerie and other security agents of the country were part of a grand scheme supporting the political excesses of Yayah Jammeh in The Gambia. It also argued that Senegal was cooperating with Gambian authorities to subvert democracy in the country- to advance Senegalese interests.³⁷⁵

Media reports or opinions expressed in the media concerning the 11th November 2014, signing of the Trans Gambia bridge agreement, implicitly

³⁷⁴ “\$2 million Gambia-Senegal Spying Deal Exposed,” *Kairo*, May 25, 2014. Accessed May 27, 2014, <http://www.kaironews.com/society/2-million-gambia-senegal-spying-deal-exposed/>.

³⁷⁵ See Abdoulie John, “AL Condemns DR. Janneh Arrest,” *Kairo*, November 15, 2014. Accessed November 17, 2014, <http://www.kaironews.com/news/ai-condemns-dr-jannehs-arrest/>; Binta Bah, “Govt Issues an International Arrest Warrant for Dr. Janneh,” *The Standard Newspaper*, November 20, 2014. Accessed November 22, 2014. <http://standard.gm/site/news/5299-GOVT-ISSUES-INTERNATIONAL-ARREST-WARRANT-FOR-JANNEH.html>.

distrust interstate political relations. The 942-metre long bridge, which will cost US\$65M to construct, is Senegal's long-dreamed and the long-talked of bridge. It will connect the north and south banks of The Gambia through the Bamba-Tenda-Yelli-Tenda ferry crossing (see chapters 2 & 3).³⁷⁶

Writers using pen names left comments below a *Kairo* newspaper story that reported the story of two Gambians who were arrested in Senegal for their anti-Jammeh campaign. One comment noted that: "(don't forget they are trying to build THEIR bridge across The Gambia!)." It directly linked the arrest of the two men to interstate conspiracy and political favouritism. Another comment, which is reported below also indicated that Senegal was in fact doing everything it can to appease Gambian authorities in order to advance its interests about the bridge.

Senegal getting fed up with us or not is immaterial insofar as their wish to build the long dreamt bridge over Gambia is concerned. They have, in the past, appeased the idiosyncratic professor of idiocy, and ended up not only having 2 of their nationals murdered by him but could not even get their bodies. The main hindrance to the bridge may well be the professor.

The comment implies Senegal tolerates president Jammeh's political excesses. It furthers the theory that Gambian and Senegalese politicians care about themselves and each other, and not the people of Senegambia or even their citizens. It implies Senegal was indifferent to its two citizens who were executed in The Gambia for murder. We are not sure if Senegal has done any behind the scenes diplomatic engagements with The Gambia on the issue of its two nationals. But the comments firmly indicate these politicians are just for themselves. The comments of contributors to the media advances other theories from the media, which say that officials of the two countries watch each other's back to mutually protect their political interests at all times. It is perceivable that the politicians in the two countries at times cooperate to further their political interests, but it becomes difficult

³⁷⁶Alieu Ceesay, "Senegambian Welcome US\$65M Bridge Project," *Daily Observer*, Thursday, November 20, 2014. Accessed Thursday November 20, 2014, <http://observer.gm/africa/gambia/article/senegambians-welcome-us65m-bridge-project>.

to think of why they constantly have troubles over the border between the two countries.

If the border serves the interests of Gambian and Senegalese politicians, it also serves those of the media, too. The latter can use its debates on the border and interstate relations to promote itself as the opposite of politicians. However, its ability to swing between two different political mindsets about Senegambia (pro-nationalist versus pro-Senegambia) orients it towards some middle ground. When the pro-nationalist and the pro-Senegambia arguments collide, they eventually move towards a centered approach to interstate relations. In that sense, the media can use the border to foster its adherence to certain universal norms such as independence, transparency and accountability. It can use the border, its audience society and the governments, its sources to foster that. In the next section, we share how like the media, civil society groups can also derive benefits from interstate tensions over the border.

5.3: Mediating the Fight: Civil Society and Interstate Relations

From the previous section, we see the media can use interstate issues and the border as tools that help it “perform” the universal norms that define the roles of the media in society. In this section, we will explore how groups that call themselves civil society groups also use the border and interstate relations to perform their roles. All these stories are about the use of creativity and contingency in pursuing different goals. The stories also imply that the border works for different people in different ways.

Recently, groups professing civil society mandates have emerged as new negotiators of The Gambia-Senegal relations. They are more active during interstate crisis moments, and less so during calm and stability. These groups are influenced by their own operational logic. However, they depend on resources from other “partners” to carry on the work they do on interstate relations. It is therefore instructive to revisit the roles civil society

groups play during interstate crisis to see how their intervention come from using other means to make the interstate crisis over the border work to the advantage of individuals or organisations. The ad hoc nature of these groups is related to how they seek to serve the moment or for the moment to serve them. Hence as soon as the crisis settles down, they “disappear” from sight and their programs and events stand-still.

In 2014, as the border crisis reached climax, The Senegalese-Gambia Association for Integration and Socio-Economic Development (SGAISD) organised “The Great Senegambia Conference and Symposium,” in The Gambia. SGAISD, describes itself as a grassroots bilateral civil society organisation, with a pro-Senegambia mission. It seeks to foster political, cultural and economic integration between The Gambia and Senegal.

From 31st May – 1st June 2014, SGAISD also organised a conference on the theme: “Can Senegambia integration be a necessary tool for the socio-economic development of its people?” High profile politicians from both The Gambia and Senegal attended both the symposium and the conference. For a self-declared grassroots organisation, SGAISD considers itself a non-aligned and non-political group. But its work seemed to be designed to appease political leaders in the two countries and to develop its own political capital that will give it legitimacy on both sides of the border. By receiving the endorsement of Senegambian politicians, it can access resources from national, regional and international organisations to fund its event.

Comaroff and Comaroff’s concept of civil society implies that civil society struggles against the state.³⁷⁷ This means civil society acts as a restraint on the state and promotes good governance in Africa.³⁷⁸ It mobilises mass public opinion, attempts behavioural modification by civil action, protests, press conferences, demonstrations and petitions. Its ability

³⁷⁷ John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa: Critical Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 21.

³⁷⁸ Nelson Kasfir, ed. *Civil Society and Democracy in Africa, Critical Perspectives* (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1998).

to manage and frame its concerns is critical to its successes as a platform for change.³⁷⁹ But SGAISD prefers to work as part of the state and not as an opposition to the state. Therefore, its ability to work as a proper civil society group that can hold the two governments accountable in a transparent way and for the benefit of the civil population is hindered. Also, we should think that during its events as a civil society group, it would prioritise the participation of ordinary people from the grassroots. But it attracted politicians and the media more than the civil population.

SGAISD is not political but it uses political strategies to pursue its goals. For example at the end of its conference on 1st June, 2014, attendees to the conference signed a communiqué on interstate relations. The communiqué is a political tool that is usually used in interstate/bilateral and international political engagements to formalise and affirm political agreements among parties. Instead of using more civil-society apt communication strategies, SGAISD uses strategies and language that are familiar to politicians. As a group that wants politicians to endorse its legitimacy, the use of the communiqué was in order. Additionally, it was intended for high-level political authority in both countries. As such, it uses language as well as strategies that can attract its political audience and this sets it apart from other civil society groups who take on their full roles as proper civil society groups, whose mandates are formed and exist beyond the moment.

In the communiqué, SGAISD praised the two states for their recent revival of the Senegal-Gambian Permanent Secretariat (SGPS). It declared support for policy decisions, which led to the creation of the Senegalo-Gambia Border Management Commission and the Consultative Commission on Senegalo-Gambian Cooperation, respectively. It further declared that the people of the two countries need sustainable development. It urged the two states to enforce interstate protocols on “road transit,” and other pro-integration measures that are stipulated in the charters of UN, AU,

³⁷⁹ Hutter and O'Mahony, “The Role of Civil Society,...” 2004, 7.

ECOWAS. SGAISD' also declared: "We are committed to close cooperation, an uninterrupted cross-border trade and technology transfer between the two countries." It cautions the governments of The Gambia and Senegal to be cautious of non-state actors who seek to pursue interests that are not sensitive to the interests and welfare of the peoples of both countries.³⁸⁰

The communiqué was therefore a tool to endear SGAISD to Senegambian politicians. It informs them it is their ally. It tries to monopolise political capital for itself by labeling other non-state actors as irresponsible to the needs of Senegambian people.

SGAISD uses what serves it best in Senegambian culture in order to maintain its legitimacy and to exploit power and the political economy of The Gambia-Senegal border. It reinforces Ake's view that African political, economic and social forces selectively appropriate African traditional institutions and culture to advance their interests.³⁸¹ As a civil society group and a non-state actor, it assumes that state agents were more interested in Senegambian unity. They are also more interested in the welfare of Senegambians. It ignores the fact that both state and non-state actors have contributed to the collapse of the Senegambia confederation, which sought to reclaim Senegambian unity.³⁸² It also ignores the fact that conflict decisions in interstate relations generally come from the top.

The conference provided space for Senegambian politicians to further share their usual political rhetoric on interstate relations. Dodou Bammy Jagne, the Gambian Ambassador to Senegal, told the conference "relationship between the two countries is very cordial." He also declared that both The Gambia and Senegal "...are very committed to the cause of Senegambia integration and [this forum] will further strengthen our work... to

³⁸⁰ Lamin B. Darbo and Momodou Fall, "Jammeh, Sall Bilateral "Bold" Decisions Hailed- As Maiden Senegambia Conference Wraps Up," *Daily Observer Newspaper*, June 3, 2014. Accessed June 3, 2014, <http://observer.gm/africa/gambia/article/jammeh-sall-bilateral-bold-decisions-hailed-as-maiden-senegambia-conference-wraps-up>.

³⁸¹ Claude Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa* (DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1996), 12.

³⁸² Arnold Hughes, and David Perfect, *A Political History of the Gambia, 1816-1994* (*Rochester studies in African History and the Diaspora*), (University of Rochester Press, Rochester, 2008).

meet the desired goals of the people of the two countries.” These words were not different from the words Babacarr Diagne, the Senegalese ambassador to The Gambia delivered to the same conference. Diagne expressed “gratitude to the leadership of the two countries for their commitment to the relations between the two nations.” Dodou Sallah Diop, the executive secretary of the Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat also noted that “...the two countries have had a very good relationship from time immemorial” and “the establishment of the Permanent Senegalo-Gambian Secretariat, which is housed in Banjul, will further strengthen the ties between the two countries.” Interestingly, these comments were made at a time when political disputes over the border have recurred several times during that year, 2014. At the end of the conference, too, participants signed “The Banjul Declaration of the Senegambia Integration 2014,” which was delivered to the foreign ministers of both countries, for onward transmission to Presidents Jammeh and Sall.³⁸³ Unlike the transporters and the media (see chapters 3, 4 and 5), groups like SGAISD can easily bring together politicians across both sides of the border to participate in their programmes since they are like an extension of state authorities.

We can consider SGAISD as a group that tries to pacify political authorities in Senegambia. As a civil society group that explores a new frontier as an advocate in cross-border and interstate relations, SGAISD understands that for it to effectively get the ears of the two governments, it has to ingratiate itself to them. It also understands that the success of its advocacy depend on how well it mobilises the political, economic and civil spheres of Senegambian society.³⁸⁴ As such, its stance offers an interesting

³⁸³Momodou Faal and Lamin B. Darboe, “Senegambia Confab Opens with Call for Enhanced Integration,” *Daily Observer*, Monday June 2, 2014. Accessed Monday June 2, 2014, <http://observer.gm/africa/gambia/article/senegambia-confab-opens-with-call-for-enhanced-integration>.

³⁸⁴Bridget M. Hutter and Joan O’ Mahony, “The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Regulating Business,” (Discussion paper No. 26, ESRC Centre for Analysis of Risk and Regulation, September 2004), 2.

dichotomy to a general understanding of the roles of civil society in African politics.

SGAISD seems to be a group that is trying to cash in on The Gambia-Senegal interstate tensions. Working on the side of the two governments comes from a similar approach to how states and people work with kinship to advance their political, economic, social or cultural interests in Africa.³⁸⁵ It is therefore appreciable that SGAISD can use the resources it has in the state and in regional and international organisations to build its image and solidify its status as a legitimate mediator of interstate relations. Its non-confrontational approach is valuable, however, the strategies it uses makes its identity as a civil society group debatable. It does not draw its legitimacy from the civil sphere, or from non-political indigenous sources.

The persistence of interstate crisis has therefore created employment and funding opportunities for groups who can glean opportunities from interstate crisis, especially over the border. These groups are like *Jakartas*, they seek to fill the vacuum between the political and cultural space in Senegambia. Thus, civil society engagement has now become part of processes for dialogue on interstate relations. For example, in 2011, Senegal's National Organisation for Human Rights (ONDH) decided to intervene to end a month-long border blockade. This was part of the boycott of Gambian routes, which was organised by the Senegalese Transport Association.

ONDH received sponsorship from the EU, ECOWAS and UMAO. It organised a consultative forum in The Gambia on the theme: "Human Rights Approach in the Process of Regional Integration in West Africa." This forum was slightly different from SGAISD's conference or symposium. It used a more critical approach to review interstate political difficulties over the border. It clearly identified the conflict dynamics and also the different actors

³⁸⁵Peter Geschiere wrote that the Maka of Cameroun like other African communities "worked with kinship" to routinely interpret and reinterpret their social ties. See Peter Geschiere, *Witchcraft, Intimacy, and Trust, Africa in Comparison* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), XVI.

in the border crisis. Moreover, it reviewed the different claims that parties to the border conflict have used to justify their various actions. For instance, it looked at the reasons why Senegalese Transport Association refused Gambian vehicles entry into Senegal. It also scrutinised if transporters' queries about the number of checkpoints on the cross-border routes, behaviour of ferry personnel, ferry user fee increases and so on, were legitimate.³⁸⁶

By professionally engaging with the border conflict, participants in the forum unanimously agreed that the Senegalese Transport Association's border blockades contravened ECOWAS protocols on the free movement of people and goods. The forum therefore recommended that the two countries should engage in constructive dialogue to reach sustainable solutions to the border crisis. This recommendation was similar to the recommendations from the Dakar-based Senegalese civil society organisation CAR-Leneen. CAR-Leneen has previously called for a joint stakeholder meeting to address the border crisis. The meeting was to consist of representatives of the two governments, members of the transport unions and representatives from civil society groups in both countries. Convening such a meeting would be a way to effectively negotiate ongoing border crisis as well as avoiding future ones.³⁸⁷

Groups like SGAISD, ONDH and CAR-Leneen approach interstate political difficulties in different ways. But the border crisis offers all of them opportunities to engage with interstate political difficulties and to access funding for their advocacy. Most groups like these ones work on interstate relations only during crisis moments and as soon as the crisis settles down, they are either out of business or they move onto other things. Their ad hoc programming on interstate relations comes from a desire to contribute towards resolving the crisis and also to entrench their economic, political or

³⁸⁶ Wade and Jammeh Urged to Meet Over Border Stand-Off," *Daily News*, May 3 -4, 2011.

³⁸⁷ Isatou Bittaye, "Senegal Civil Society Speaks on Gambia-Senegal Border Closure," *Foroyaa*, May 4-5, 2011, 1 and 18.

social interests. Thus, the border and border crisis work for these groups like they do for other state and non-state actors in Senegambia.

These civil society groups have been effective in packaging themselves as “neutral” arbitrators during The Gambia-Senegal border crisis. They have been recognised by multilateral entities like ECOWAS and the EU as problem-solving advocates for Senegambia integration. They became de facto monitors of relevant international protocols supporting free movement of people and goods across the borders. They generally rely on the agenda of the international system and sub-regional or international partners to frame their cross-border agenda. Thus, they hardly mobilise around existing cross-border social structures, since they align their agenda to international policy goals in order to mobilise funding from multilateral agencies to sustain their cross-border social and political campaigns. As such, civil society groups in Senegambia have also learnt to use the resources they have in the border, in the state, in society and in regional and international bodies to advance their interests. This makes the border a mix-motive game in society.

5.4: Conclusion

The chapter has shown how the border crisis, the restructured interstate transport sector and interstate political tensions created new economic opportunities for both state and non-state actors. The *Jakartas* found business at the border, the commune finds new tax resources, the media can boost its image and civil society groups also find new funding opportunities for their work and staff. These new opportunities come with other forms of tensions. *Jakartas* fight with the commune over taxation and other issues, they fight with border communities and Gambian authorities and they are engaged in intermode rivalries with *clandos* and carts. The media also plays both positive and divisive roles in interstate relations and civil society advocacy also include subtle rivalries. Thus, we can conclude that conflict is inherent in social, political and economic processes of society. What matters most is how people deal with that conflict and what outcomes

they seek from engaging with that conflict. The chapter also provides into the nuanced nature of state-society relations, transporter-state relations as well media-state and civil-society state relations. It also identifies how people use contingency and creativity to navigate the complex context of the border and interstate relations to protect their interests. This chapter leads us to chapter 6, which shows how traders work with the border, the state and other resources to enhance their interests.

CHAPTER 6

CROSS-BORDER TRADE AND THE GAMBIA-SENEGAL RELATIONS

When you share the same bedroom, the same lunch and the same cup even the way you have your breakfast can cause disturbance or the way you sleep. This is very frequent but you resolve those problems in a family way.... instead of going outside and saying what your wife told you or your husband. It should be a close family. (Ambassador Saidou Nourou Ba)³⁸⁸

6.0: Cross-Border Traders and Social Interactions in Senegambia

Although The Gambia and Senegal have had longstanding disagreements about cross-border trade between the two countries, it has always existed. Cross-border trade is part of Senegambian social life. It connects goods to people and people to people. It minimises social conflict and builds relations of trust among different individuals across distances.³⁸⁹

However, Nugent argues that the existence of cross-border trade may not imply inter-communal harmony.³⁹⁰ But irrespective of its inherent tensions, cross-border trade between The Gambia and Senegal contributes

³⁸⁸ Sainey Darbo, "Saidou Nourou Ba Senegalese diplomat, (continuation," *The Standard Newspaper*, 21st November 2014, accessed Sunday 30th November 2014, <http://standard.gm/site/bantaba/5309-Saidou-Nourou-Senegalese-diplomat-CONTINUATION.html>

³⁸⁹ Philip Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975).

³⁹⁰ See Paul Nugent, "Border Towns and Cities in a Comparative Perspective," in *A Companion to Border Studies*, First Edition, eds. Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, 557- 572 (London: Blackwell Publishers, 2012); Paul Nugent, "Border Anomalies - The Role of Local Actors in Shaping Spaces along the Senegal-Gambia and Ghana-Togo Borders." In *Beside The State Emergent Powers in Contemporary Africa*, edited by Alice Bellagamba and George Klute, (n/a) (Koln: Rudiger Koppe Verlag, 2008).

to cross-border harmony.³⁹¹ This chapter focuses on the importance language plays in enhancing trading relations in Senegambia. Traders' use of language has a performative quality to it. But it is part of a broad practice in which Senegambians use metaphors and social idioms of relations to foster cross-border ties.

The main question this chapter explores is: what are the cross-border trade practices at The Gambia-Senegal border? It also explores a subsidiary question, which is: How did traders integrate socio-cultural idioms of relations in their trading to foster a collective sense of harmony that has helped to de-escalate interstate political tensions in The Gambia-Senegal relations? The evidence used in this chapter mainly derives from an ethnography conducted on the cross-border trade money and commodities markets at the Karang-Amdallai and Keur Ayib- Farrafenni borders. The chapter identifies how traders use deep-rooted societal and religious principles to enhance their economic activities, navigate conflict and overcome the limitations of territory.

The introduction of the chapter is followed by a discussion of how trade in commodities intersects social and religious values, to foster social bonds. After this, the chapter explores how Senegambian markets encourage solidarity, and sustains connections among people. This is followed by a survey of the trading and life histories of selected traders. The life histories are used to exemplify how traders navigate institutional constraints. They also highlight how traders tolerate and depend on the state as they follow the profit across the border. Next, the chapter explores gender dynamics and subtle tensions in the border currency trade at the Amdallai-Karang border. This is followed by a discussion of the consumption patterns and attitudes in Keur Ayib. After this, the chapter discusses the cross-border fish trade and how it promotes interstate harmony. This is followed by the conclusion of the chapter.

³⁹¹Mahoney also gives interesting aspects of Senegambian life see Florence Mahoney, *Stories of Senegambia* (Fajara: Government Printers, 1981).

6.1: Intersections: Cross-Border Commodity Trade and Senegambian Social Life

Historically, the most common commodities traded through the Karang-Amdallai and Farrafenni-Keur Ayib borders can be broadly categorised into consumer and non-consumer goods. The first category included rice, oil, fishery products, cashew nuts, vegetables, fruits, tomato paste, medicaments, milk, textiles and clothes, shoes, cement, gas and electronics. In Senegambia, textiles, electronics, milk and fish are used for both consumption and to satisfy symbolic social functions.

Textile symbolises endurance in relationships. It is also a symbol of social protection. It is used in weddings, initiation ceremonies, births and funerals, to strengthen interpersonal ties. It is also socially desirable for people to exchange textile gifts. Wearing a textile gift from another person is considered a deeply intimate act. Cloth or textile is also considered an object of beauty and love. It is also a symbol of wealth sharing and status. Dress expresses the economic status of its wearer. High value traditional cloths and some expensive modern textiles are used to communicate social status in Senegambia.³⁹²

Textile is also a symbol of equity in Senegambia. *Ashobi* is the name of the common social practice whereby, groups of individuals or sometimes a village, wear identical clothing, to celebrate a social or religious event. *Ashobi* promotes friendship, a sense of belonging and equity among individuals with different income levels and social status. So, *Ashobi* helps to create a sense of equality of status during a particular event.³⁹³ Thus, the

³⁹² For a detailed discussion of the role of cloth in other African cultures see Judith Perani, and Norma H. Wolff, *Cloth, Dress and Art Patronage in Africa* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1999).

³⁹³ I have worn *ashobi* clothing in the past as part of family or other social celebrations in my community.

use of the fabric metaphor to signify The Gambia-Senegal relations derives from the important roles textile plays in Senegambian society (see chapters 1 & 7).

Milk is another commodity that serves important cultural functions in Senegambia. Generally, it is used in naming, initiation and wedding ceremonies, and in religious events. It is also used to welcome guests, especially in rural settings.³⁹⁴ Radio sets also have social functions in Senegambia. They have been, until recently, part of the ensemble of gifts a bridegroom presented to his bride.

Thus, cross-border trade in Senegambia involves trading in goods that symbolise kinship, *mbokh* or *badinya*.³⁹⁵ So, cross-border trading enhances Senegambian socialisation processes. Literature on West African trading networks and traditional markets commonly use the term “*juula*,” to identify the people behind West Africa’s legendary long-distance trade.³⁹⁶ *Juula* comes from the Mandinka word “*juulo*,” which means “rope” or “connector.” The word is a metaphor for how traders travelled all the corners of the Mandinka Empire and beyond, bringing and taking goods to communities. In that process, they established and sustained various networks of ties in Mandeng and beyond. Through trading, they also created new settlements and political principalities that became vassal territories of the Mandeng king, and paid tribute to him.³⁹⁷ The term “*juulo*” or “*juula*” is therefore a metaphor, for the roles trading and traders play in building relations and sustaining livelihoods through travel and the exchange of goods. Hence, Senegambians consider trading as a vocation that is embedded in relational ties and develops best through compromise and, cooperation.

However, trading is inherently full of tensions. The longstanding trade disputes between The Gambia-Senegal validate this statement (see

³⁹⁴ Milk has been an important commodity for rituals in my own culture.

³⁹⁵ The former is a Wolof term and latter Mandinka term for kinship.

³⁹⁶ See Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *A Modern Economic History of Africa. Vol. 1: The Nineteenth Century* (Codesria Book Series) (Dakar: Codesria Book Series, 1993).

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

chapters 1, 2, 4 & 5). But traders value stability, and therefore, they seek to establish cooperative relations with fellow traders and with other people in society.³⁹⁸ The encounter between Buckor Sano, a local Senegambian merchant and Richard Jobson, an English traveler and trader, illustrates the above point. Sano told Jobson that the two of them share more in common than either of them with the king. “I seek abroad as you do; and therefore am nearer unto you, said Sano.”³⁹⁹ This encounter confirms that trade is borderless and traders cross many borders to pursue their economic goals. In the next section, we explore how traders and trading practices navigate conflict and how markets build relations that help traders to access different resources that advance their trading goals.

6.2: Senegambian Markets as Sites for Building Relations: Banjul

From the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods, The Gambia’s island capital Banjul, has always been a center of commerce for local, regional and long-distance trade. Thanks to its commercial prosperity in the post-independence period, Banjul’s trade contributed to the successes of Gambian re-export trade. The Gambia cashed in on its liberal economic policies, which differentiated it from Senegal.⁴⁰⁰ It became part of the “coastal warehouse states” of West Africa.⁴⁰¹ For many years, its re-export trade to neighbouring countries was the lifeline of its national economy.

Nugent observed that competing economic regimes existed between most neighbouring African countries from the colonial period. Direct taxation, customs duties and labour requirements forced populations to migrate to border areas in order to escape from the extractive demands of the colonial

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁹ Lamin Sanneh, *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 7.

⁴⁰⁰ Daniel C. Bach, “New regionalism as an Alias: Regionalization Through Trans- State Networks,” in *New Regionalism in Africa*, eds by J. Andrew Grant and Frederik Soderbaum, (n/a) (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003).

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 26

regime.⁴⁰² As people participated in economic opportunities around the borders, smuggling, a consequence of national economic policy disparities between neighbouring countries, crept in. After the end of colonisation, these dynamics continued, and contributed to the existence of border towns. Populations and communities along the border developed transnational flows that largely escaped the grip of the postcolonial state. In some cases, local populations regarded themselves as the owners of lucrative border spaces, in competition with state officials.⁴⁰³ These outcomes from colonial economic policies shaped The Gambia-Senegal trade dynamics, and Banjul's prosperity as a commercial center.

Historically, Senegal struggled to control both its internal trade and its trade with The Gambia. It intensively regulated its commercial sector, but different trading interests competed to dominate trade. It had a two-pronged commercial agenda: to protect peasants from traders and to protect foreign business interests.⁴⁰⁴ Senegalese businesses were subordinate to both the state's commercial and foreign business interests. The pro-foreign investment policies of the state enabled European trading companies to monopolise and exclude local businesses, from the importation of consumer goods. Local businesses mainly operated in the informal sector. However, they leveraged themselves against foreign business interests and contested the state's policies.

Before and after independence, these businesses dominated informal sector transport and internal distribution networks and evaded the state's regulatory authority.⁴⁰⁵ By the 1980s, these businesses were a force against the state and foreign business interests.

⁴⁰²Nugent, "Border Towns ..." 2012.

⁴⁰³ See *Ibid*, 2012, 566; Oliver J. Walther, "Trade networks in West Africa: a social network approach," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 52, 2(2014), 179- 203; Markus Vigil Hoehne, and Dereje Feyissa, "Centering Borders and Borderlands: The Evidence from Africa," in *Violence on the Margins, State, Conflict and Borderlands: The Evidence from Africa*, ed. Benedikt Korf, and Timothy Raeymaekers (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

⁴⁰⁴Thioub et al. "Economic Liberalization ..." 1998.

⁴⁰⁵*Ibid*, 67.

Senegal- Gambia contraband trading networks expanded dramatically as Senegalese peasants sought to evade the official peanut marketing board. Development of contraband circuits propelled the rise of powerful business groups connected to the Mouride Islamic order. Well-placed state agents and members of government also became involved in this business, as did large numbers of petty traders and transporters. These parallel or informal commercial circuits extended into Dakar as contraband goods found their way in urban markets. The process fueled a dramatic expansion of the “informal sector.”⁴⁰⁶

Economic policy differences between The Gambia and Senegal enabled ordinary people to exploit cross-border economic opportunities in Senegambia. The Gambia is located on a major crossroad for population flows in West Africa. It was both a transit zone and a final destination for numerous groups of people during different periods of West African history. So, it has always been a fertile trading ground.⁴⁰⁷ Gambian re-export trade continued Banjul’s legacy as a fertile trading space.⁴⁰⁸ Banjul’s expansive commodity markets successfully attracted traders from Europe, Senegal and other West African countries.

Under President Sir Dawda Jawara, Banjul was notable for its thriving diverse commercial community of Africans, Asians and European traders. Its re-export trade expanded in West Africa.⁴⁰⁹ Traders from the West African sub-region came to Banjul to buy goods and took them to different West African countries. A swiftly growing shipping industry, a viable road transport and reliable ferry systems aided the re-export trade. Thus, the re-export trade built relations across several international boundaries and among multiple ethnicities. In the next section, we explore how textile-trading activities at Banjul’s Albert market built inter-trader relations and helped them share the benefits of trade. Their relations can be contrasted

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 70

⁴⁰⁷ Thioub et al. “Economic Liberalization ...” 1998; Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Curtin, *Economic Change*, 1975.

⁴⁰⁸ The Gambia served as a major trading hub during the Trans-Saharan and Trans-Atlantic trade and under the colonial economy.

⁴⁰⁹ See Paul Nugent and Anthony I. Asiwaju, “Introduction: The Paradox of African Boundaries,” in *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits, and Opportunities*, edited by Paul Nugent and Anthony I. Asiwaju, 1- 17 (London: Pinter, 1996).

with inter-transporter relations under the restructured transport system (see chapter 4 & 5).

6.3: Banjul's Albert Market and Textile Sales at *Roohe Diskett*

This section on the Albert Market and textile sales at *Roohe Diskett* is based on my personal recollections of growing up as a student who loved shopping in Banjul in the 1990s. It is also based on my own experience trading at the Brikama market, where I attended to my mother's merchandise shop, which sold goods from Banjul, Kaolack (Senegal) and Guinea Bissau. The textiles market provides a good example of inter-trader relations and how traders share the benefits of trade, even amidst trading rivalries.

Albert Market is the central market in Banjul. In the 1980s and 1990s, at the apex of the re-export trade, it was a frontier of creativity. It embodied diverse economic interests, which competed against each other. Trading practices at the market typified deep-rooted social and religious values. But the economic geography of the market revealed how trading was a domain characterised by tension. For example, *N and N*, a popular large Chinese store stood at the edge of the Market in those days. *WEDADS*, a similarly popular large Lebanese store was further down the street from *N and N*. The two stores engaged in both retail and wholesale trade in goods such as clothes, shoes, handbags and many other manufactured fashion items. They were favourite stores for urban Gambians and Banjul's multi-national cross-border traders. As obvious competitors, each of the stores invested heavily on advertisement to attract more customers. Despite their rivalry, they shared mutual concerns and a common interest to grow their investments in The Gambia, as expatriate investors working in the country. *N and N* and *WEDADS* stood amidst several large textile stores, which stretched along the main street of the Albert Market. These stores supplied local demands for textiles. They were also sources of re-export textiles to countries like Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Mali and Sierra Leone.

N and N and *WEDADS* were famous sources for readymade clothing. In contrast, the textiles stores specialised in selling just textiles. The possibility to choose between readymade clothes and textile (to be sewn into a desired style) meant the two goods were substitutes and implicitly, their sellers were competitors.⁴¹⁰ However, the rivalry between *N and N* and *WEDADS* was more obvious, than the competition between the two stores and the textiles shops.

N and N and *WEDADS*' rivalry was implicit in what later happened to the two businesses. For example, *N and N* went out of business and its investors returned to China in the late 1990s. In contrast, *WEDADS* was transformed into a high-income fashions store along the Senegambia Road in Kololi. It is situated in the Tourism Development Areas of the Kombos. To this day, it attracts high income Gambians, foreign customers and tourists, to its store. The "end" story for these two vendors has something to do with bilateral relations and international politics. However, the nuances of trade rivalries have also played a strong part in determining how the fate of each of these stores ended in The Gambia.

Similar to the *N and N* and *WEDADS*' story, the textiles market had its internal rivalries. The story of *Roohe Diskett* offers a good example of how that rivalry played out in the market. *Roohe Diskett* was a popular parallel textiles corner market that was established through Senegalese business ingenuity. It was located at the fringes of the Albert Market. The name comes from Wollof. It means "the corner for fashionable ladies." Senegalese textile traders, who migrated to The Gambia for both long and short stays in the country, started *Roohe Diskett*.

Roohe Diskett traders who had capital invested in and owned retail textile stalls at *Roohe Diskett*. These investor-traders allowed family members and friends (mostly male youth) to trade with them at their stalls.

⁴¹⁰ On what motivates economic actors to cooperate see Sara Berry, *No condition is permanent: the social dynamics of agrarian change in sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

The latter were usually people who were interested in doing business, but did not have capital to invest. Most of them crossed the border into The Gambia looking for economic opportunities. Similar to the relationship between drivers and apprentices in the transport sector, *Roohe Diskett's* stall owners were patrons to these relatives and friends (see chapter 3). Principles of *mbokh* and *dome-ndeye* shaped the business practices of traders, which derived from deep-rooted social and religious values. *Roohe Diskett* had interesting internal trading arrangements that helped both investors and their aids to create wealth and expand their trading careers.

Stall owners functioned more like middlemen in the textiles trade. Usually, they bought their stock from the big textile stores in Banjul. Textile prices at these corner stalls were higher than textile prices at the main stores. While owners sat over their stalls, their sales agents walked the main street of Albert Market looking for potential textile buyers to lure to the patron's stall. These agents were skilled salesmen. Their quick eyes and fast judgment helped them pick-out potential textile buyers from the crowd. The men also had an incredible knowledge of tailoring and women's fashions. They effectively use their skills to lure customers to buy their wares. And like Jakarta drivers, during high demand periods like the time for Muslim *Eid* prayers or Christmas, they increased the prices of their textiles, and encourage bargaining.

Unlike the big textiles stores, *Roohe Diskett* had free-floating textiles prices. For example, the sales agent who lured a potential buyer to his patron's stall tripled the selling price of the textile. His patron watched the transaction evolve. At times, he intervened by praising the quality of the textile to convince the potential buyer that the price the agent was offering him/her was "reasonable" for such good quality textiles. Stall owners paid commission to agents, from each sale. Patron and agent both hoped to make more profit and more commission on each textiles sale. Hence, they exploited customers who they perceived were ill-informed or ignorant about existing market prices for textiles.

The systems of unregulated prices made the corner market a space for *waahale*. When used in the context of trading, the Wollof term, *waahale*, means price-dialogue or price negotiation. This practice is similar to the *Jakarta* drivers' free-floating fare system (see chapter 5). But unlike the *Jakarta* drivers, the textiles traders supported rather than undercut each other. Generally, they successfully employed *waahale* to their advantage and thus, their profitable trade helped them advance their trading careers in Banjul. Most of the time, after making lot of money from their trade, traders or their sales agents returned home to start bigger retail or import businesses. Some of them stayed on in The Gambia. They became successful retailers, importers or re-exporters of various commodities.

By pulling customers from the street to their corner stores, *Roohe Diskett* traders artfully intercepted traders who could have gone to the main stores and pay less for their textiles. But this competitive behaviour did not attract any obvious response from the big textiles stores. In fact, some of the big store owners loaned textile supplies to stall owners, and tacitly endorsed the trading practices at *Roohe Diskett*. Stall owners paid store owners after selling their supplies. This arrangement confirms that traders had a more liberal attitude towards competition. In contrast to traders, transporters sought to cut off competitors in order to monopolise the market (see chapter 4 & 5).⁴¹¹

Roohe Diskett operated as a solidarity corner market at the fringe of the bigger textiles market in Banjul. The solidarity that existed in the market was similar to the inter-driver solidarity under the common transport network (see chapter 3). As "migrant" hustlers, *Roohe Diskett* traders operated in ways that were reminiscent of how other West African trading groups operated while trading in their host countries.⁴¹² Traders depended on each other. They navigated tension in productive ways, and advanced their

⁴¹¹ For more on how West African markets enhanced social relations, see Manthia Diawara, *In Search of Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); See Walther, "Trade networks in West Africa..."2014.

⁴¹² See Diawara, *In Search...* 2000.

mutual interests, even if at the expense of customers who paid more for textiles they could have bought for less. Traders' practices at *Roohe Diskett* sought to minimise uncooperative modes of behaviour, hence, the market encouraged bargaining even with customers they sought to exploit. They used language to their advantage. The name they gave to their market was attractive and drew many women to the corner market. They also created inclusive practices that fostered a viable informal system of social insurance for traders with capital and those without it. It can therefore be concluded that cross-border traders that traded at *Roohe Diskett* developed and sustained different forms of social and economic bonds in Senegambia. But the ability to successfully navigate tension and advance one's trading interests is not unique to the *Roohe Diskett* traders. In the next section, we explore the story of *Marché Gambie* and its trading practices, to show a second case where cross-border traders successfully navigated tension and conflict and created a multi-million CFA franc transnational textiles and garment industry in Senegal.

6.4: Senegal's *Marché Gambie*

The creation of *Marché Gambie*, a cross-border and transnational textiles/garment industry in Senegal, is another example of how traders (women traders in this case) used deep-rooted social and religious principles to advance their trading interests and to navigate the border. It is also an example of how traders adapt to social, political or spatial changes that affect their economic activities.⁴¹³ Additionally, it shows the importance of language and how the name people give to things and to people matter in Senegambian social thought.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹³ See Oliver J. Walther, "Trade networks in West Africa..." 2014

⁴¹⁴ See Molefi Kete Asante, *The Book of African Names* (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1991); Askew's work on Tanzania also indicates the importance of language, names and performances in another African context, see Kelly M. Askew, *Performing the Nation, Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

The women traders who created *Marché Gambie* belong to the Mouride Islamic brotherhood, which comprises about 4 million followers in West Africa and in other parts of the world. Cheikh Amadou Bamba Mbacke was the charismatic spiritual founder of the brotherhood. His teachings valorised labor, worship and community. The Mouride brotherhood historically controlled Senegal's groundnut basin, and nowadays, it has vibrant and prosperous commercial and trading networks in Senegal, other African countries, the US, Europe, China, Brazil and other parts of the globe.⁴¹⁵

Generally, women cross-border traders come from trading families. Most of them have husbands who trade, too. Some of them are also married to immigrants to Europe or the USA. They belong to wide trading networks and these networks help their members to advance their trading careers.⁴¹⁶ They also help traders to effectively adapt to socio-political and other changes that affect their economic activities.⁴¹⁷

Marché Gambie is in Colobane, a notorious “*slum quartier*”, which is located at the edge of Dakar. The history behind the founding of the market shows how trade is characterised by tension that can be both violent and non-violent. It further shows how social bonds can serve different ends in state-society relations and in interpersonal ties. It also shows how language shapes perceptions and social attachments in society.

Marché Gambie was born from the ashes of a market called *marché market-man*. The latter's name was from Senegalese youth slang. It derived

⁴¹⁵Cheikh Anta Babou, C.A. *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadou Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal, 1853- 1913* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); Paul E. Lovejoy, *Ecology and Ethnography of Muslim Trade in West Africa* (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 2005); Donal B. Cruise O' Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal: The Political and Economic Organization of an Islamic Brotherhood in Senegal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

⁴¹⁶ The textile/garment industry is used here to refer to the import of textile from Europe and Asia into The Gambia for subsequent re-export to Senegal where it is redistributed to other buyers for processing into finished garments for both local and other markets in West Africa. In this narrow sense, the textile/garment industry does not include the production of textile raw materials and their processing into yarn and fabrics.

⁴¹⁷ Walther, “Trade networks...2014.

from the combination of the French word *marché* with two English nouns “market” and “man.” The word “*market-man*” refers to dispossessed and underprivileged youth from Colobane and other areas of Dakar, who sought survival from the *marché*, *the market*. *The marché market-man* consisted of a popular underground market, where illegal or stolen goods were sold.⁴¹⁸

In the 1980s, with widespread economic hardship and structural adjustment in Senegal, dispossessed youth and other Dakaroises flocked to Colobane and the *marché market-man* to buy various kinds of stolen or illicit goods - shoes, second hand clothing electronics and other items (see chapters 1 & 2). This unregulated economy attracted constant police raids, but traders who traded there persisted. Between 1980 and 1989, Mauritanian (Moorish) traders who wanted to escape from congestion at “upscale” Dakar and central city markets such as Sandaga and HLM, started trading at the market. Unlike in Sandaga and HLM, the Colobane market had enough space for new shops or stalls. Additionally, it was inexpensive to buy a stall or a shop from there.

Mauritanian (Moorish) traders were the major traders in Senegal’s wholesale and retail commerce, at that time. They sold textiles, foodstuffs, petrol, gas and general merchandise. They dominated local markets, monopolised neighborhood shops and roast meat markets throughout Senegambia.

Given the notorious reputation of the Colobane market, Moorish traders decided to relocate only their textiles stores there. Textiles were mostly available in thick, huge rolls that were difficult to steal. It was considered a low-risk commodity for a high-risk market such as the *marché market-man*.

The Moorish traders obtained most of their textiles supplies from Mouride women traders, who mostly bought their textiles supplies from Gambia-based importers, for re-export to Senegal. When the Moorish traders relocated to Colobane, these suppliers also joined them. The arrival

⁴¹⁸ Interview with Edrissa Dioum, trader at *Marché Gambie*, Dakar, Senegal, 29th May, 2013.

of “honest” business at *marché market-man* created a market of many colors and this gradually transformed the market’s reputation. The textile market was named “*marché Colobane*,” or “Colobane,” in the short form. Its trade in licit goods existed side by side with trade in stolen goods.

The relationship between the Mouride women who imported textiles from The Gambia and their Mauritanian customers in Senegal, made the textiles trade a largely gender segregated market. Mouride women supplied textiles to Mauritanian wholesale and retail textiles dealers in Dakar. Other Senegalese and non-Senegalese textiles buyers in Senegal obtained their supplies from the Mauritanian traders. This supply chain fostered a lucrative trade for the different people who were engaged in the textiles trade.

However, in 1989, this trading chain was abruptly interrupted when the Senegal-Mauritania border conflict broke out (see chapter 1).⁴¹⁹ At the time of the conflict, about 500,000 Mauritians lived in Senegal. But these Moors fled Senegal as the conflict raged, leading to the expulsion of 600,000 Senegalese and Mauritians from the Region de Fleuve area, where the communal violence that preceded the conflict erupted.⁴²⁰

The sudden exit of Mauritanian traders who dominated the textiles trade in Senegal affected the textiles supply chain. It handicapped the market, disrupting Mouride women’s “sweet and prosperous Gambian import/re-export trade.”⁴²¹ The market had to be rescued from collapse and Mouride women took up the task. The next section explores how the women reconfigured their textiles trade to create *Marché Gambie*.

6.5: The Birth of *Marché Gambie*

After the Mauritanian traders fled Senegal as a result of the 1989 border conflict, Mouride women textiles suppliers requested Dakar’s mayor to officially hand over the Colobane textiles market to them. The mayor granted their request and the women changed the market’s name to *Marché Gambie*

⁴¹⁹ “Senegal observes a day of Mourning,” *The Gambia Weekly*, May 5, 1989, 1-10.

⁴²⁰ Pap Saine, “Libya helps out Senegal,” *The Gambia Weekly*, August 18, 1989, 9.

⁴²¹ Interview with Mam Hawa Saho, *Marché Gambie*, Dakar, Senegal, 29th May, 2013.

(market of The Gambia). The new name derived from the fact that most of the textiles sold at the market was re-imported from The Gambia. The women were determined to change the face of the market and also to deepen their economic ties with The Gambia. They disbanded all temporary stalls and built new, attractive, fixed and durable structures in their place. They started both the wholesale and retail trading of textiles in their renovated market. They also expanded the range of textiles on offer at the market.

When the Mauritians were in charge of the textiles market, the most common types of textiles sold in the market were *wax*, *mbazin*, and *hartum*. These types of textiles were used to make traditional clothes. But the women introduced new types of textiles such as jeans and viscose. These materials were good for sewing Western-styled costumes. So, it attracted Male Guinean or *Peul* tailors, who specialised in sewing Western-styled costumes for the West African market, to join the textiles trade. These tailors mushroomed around *Marché Gambie*. They imitated designs from American and European fashion magazines and sewed Western-styled garments such as skirts, trousers, shirts and dresses. They created new fashion trends for especially West Africans youths, which peaked from 1989 to 1997.⁴²²

The new trends increased business opportunities in Dakar markets. The *Peul's* fashions creations were also exported to other West African countries. These tailors like other *Peul Fouta* traders mostly came to Senegal, to seek greener pasture and refuge from the rule of President Saikou Toure and his successor President Lansana Conte. Fulani political malcontent was transformed into a voracious trading spiritedness.⁴²³

The local finished garments industry boomed. Traders in Senegal's upscale city markets like Sandaga and HLM placed huge orders for finished garments from the tailors. Wholesale and retail garment dealerships

⁴²² *Peul Foutas* is the local name for Fulani people from Guinean Conakry.

⁴²³ For more on the commercial activities of the Fulani see Alusine Jalloh, *African Entrepreneurship: Muslim Fula Merchants in Sierra Leone* (Ohio RIS Africa Series (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1999).

flourished with customers spread across most of West Africa. As space became more congested in *Marché Gambie*, some tailors moved out to other markets in Dakar, and some relocated to countries like The Gambia and Guinea Bissau, where they started garment shops and tailoring outlets. In both countries, local traders opened shops in urban markets, trading in finished garments.

The success of the finished garments industry was anchored within the entrepreneurial activities of the women traders. The women's wholesale and retail trading business also boomed. The number of trips they made to Banjul per week increased. Mame Hawa Saho recalled that as their trading boomed at *Marché Gambie*: "We bought goods from The Gambia, but we also explored the internal Senegalese market for goods."⁴²⁴ Saho was a woman in her late sixties at the time of her interview with me. She was one of the founding women of Colobane's *Marché Gambie*. She was also one of the foremost cross-border women traders of post-independent Senegal. She has engaged in cross-border trading for thirty-years. But now, she no longer goes on trading trips. Her children do the trading trips, and now operate her shops at *Marché Gambie*, too.

As *Marché Gambie* became the center of the textiles trade nationally, the ingenuity of some of its founders was celebrated. For example, Saho earned recognition as the "Aunt" of the neighborhood and the market. She recalled that as founders of the market, they were determined to make business more prosperous after the Mauritians left. And according to her, they achieved that. She noted that: "Business was better with the departure of the Mauritians. We enjoyed the profits we got from buying the goods from The Gambia and also the profit of selling the goods to third parties in Senegal."⁴²⁵ The women's ability to see the opportunity out of a misfortune was instrumental in shaping their trading successes. However, they also depended on deep-rooted societal and religious resources to advance their trading careers.

⁴²⁴ Interview with Mam Hawa Saho, *Marché Gambie*, Dakar, Senegal, 29th May, 2013.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

The commercial relations Mouride women crafted around Marché *Gambie* and across the border were transactional in nature. But they were grounded in Senegambian social and political processes, which valorise *mbokh* and *dome-ndeye values*, to sustain traders' interpersonal relations. Given the symbolic roles textiles or fabric play in enhancing social relations in Senegambia, trading in the commodity bounded different individuals in close-knit business ties (see chapter 1 & 2).⁴²⁶

Women traders were the bridge and the link among the different entrepreneurial groups in the textiles market. But the roles they played complemented deep-rooted societal and religious perceptions about womanhood. Senegambian society uses the "needle" as the metaphor for the woman's social roles. She stitches together fragmented pieces of society. She connects people through marriages and other forms of social ties. She is a builder and a creator of social relations and community. She embodies trust, respect and serves the interests of the collective.⁴²⁷ This view sounds like a social stereotype of women. But it closely reflects the roles women traders played in creating a transnational garments industry in Senegambia following the ruptures the Senegal-Mauritania border conflict created for the textiles trade. They facilitated knowledge sharing across the border. They communicated to Banjul-based suppliers what their customers wanted. They informed customers in Senegal about market situations in The Gambia. Through these roles they played, the textiles and garments traders' informal network of economic relations resembled a formal assembly line. Any interruption in one activity jeopardised other activities along the chain. For instance, if women traders failed to bring adequate material from Banjul, it was bound to affect production in the garment industry.

⁴²⁶On the interconnections between faith and trade in West Africa see Kate Meagher, "Trading on faith: religious movements and informal economic governance in Nigeria," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 47 (2009): 397- 423. Also see Toyin Falola and N. A. Amponsah, *Women's roles in Sub-Saharan Africa*. (California: Greenwood, 2012).

⁴²⁷This comes from my own socialisation about womanhood in Senegambia; For more on women's roles in other West African cultures see Gloria Chuku, *Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria, 1900- 1960* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

The textiles trade can therefore be contrasted with the disintegrated cross-border transport sector. Transporters sought to cut-off other colleagues from the market, but textiles traders shared the market with various people (see chapters 4 & 5). However, some features of the textiles trade resonate with old practices among cross-border transporters. For example, the sales of textiles were largely based on cash. But like the transport sector under the integrated transport network, credit facilities also existed among different traders who were engaged in the trade (see chapter 3).⁴²⁸ These creditor-debtor relations were embedded in Senegambian social processes and were reflections of *mbokh* and *dome-ndeye* bonds.⁴²⁹ The same processes also served as guarantees in creditor-debtor relations. Compliance to credit obligations meant access to future credit. But default met with sanction. Consequently, the possibility of sanction may deter individuals from reneging on their debt obligations.⁴³⁰ The women traders and their trading associates used various resources at their disposal to create continuities across the discontinuity of territory. Their cross-border economic networks depended on both the states and society. In the next section, we explore how cross-border trading in Senegambia, made use of the state and the border, to advance traders' economic interests amidst the limitations of territory.

⁴²⁸Interview with Mam Hawa Saho, trader at *Marché Gambie*, Dakar, Senegal, 29th May, 2013.

⁴²⁹ See Mahoney, *Stories of...*1981.

⁴³⁰*Ibid.*

Figure 6: Textiles on sale in a textile store



Textiles re-exported from The Gambia and sold in a textiles store at *Marché Gambie*. Photo by the author, May 2013.

6.6: Navigating Cross-Border Constraints: Trader Perceptions

Like in most West African border settings, cross-border traders along The Gambia-Senegal border routinely interacted with administrative agents at the border. Consequently, they develop familiarity with border administrative procedures and the behaviour of border administrators. Their knowledge of border crossing issues shape their perceptions of the border, border administrative agents and the state. Using their perceptions, this section of the work teases-out the everyday practices of state border agents at The

Gambia-Senegal border (see chapter 1).⁴³¹ It uses the experiences and stories of individual traders who cross The Gambia-Senegal border for trading purposes, to identify the behaviour and motivations of border administrators. It also looks at how traders use kinship and other resources to navigate the border.

I start with the story of Mohamed Sow. He is a Senegalese trader, who is in his early forties. He trades goods across both sides of the border. To start his trading career, Sow bought *charraah* (flip flops) from *N* and *N*, WEDADS and from other shops at the Albert Market in Banjul, to sell them in Senegal. He later started buying *tissu daroul hodus*, a brand of textiles that is used for tie-dye. After dying the cloth, he sold it in Senegal.⁴³²

Sow invests significant capital in cross-border trading. For example, he disclosed to me that he spends between 200,000 or 300,000 or about 1,000,000 CFA francs during his trading trips. These amounts depend on the type of commodity he buys during each trip. He trades around growth centers like Tambacounda, where people have limited access to the supply of many goods, and where he can sell his goods at higher prices.⁴³³

Tambacounda is located in eastern Senegal, about 476 kilometers from Dakar. It shares borders with both The Gambia and Mali. But it has no large daily markets, no access to a river, or port facilities. Residents of the town mostly obtain their goods from weekly markets locally called *loumas*.⁴³⁴ Sow's goal is to sell his goods to residents of Tambacounda and to people who cross the border to come there, or to people returning to Mali, part of which shares borders with the town.

As a trader, Sow follows the profit to wherever he considers it to be. As Nugent and Bach argued, differences in the cost of goods across the border

⁴³¹ See Thomas Bierschenk, "States at Work in West Africa: Sedimentation, Fragmentation and Normative double-binds," Department of Anthropology and African Studies, Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz (2010), Working Paper 113.

⁴³² *Tissu daroul hhodus*- is a textile type used for showing free-flowing gowns.

⁴³³ For more on trading dynamics in Africa, see Zeleza, *A Modern Economic...*1993

⁴³⁴ *Charraah* means flip- flops.

boost traders' zeal to engage in cross-border trade.⁴³⁵ Cross-border price differences for goods influence Sow's trading choices, too. For example, he shared a story that on one occasion, there was a shortage of garlic in The Gambia. He decided to buy many bags of garlic that came from China to Senegal, and took them to Banjul. He recalled that: "I arrived at the Gambian Customs with one hundred bags of garlic. Each bag contained 20 kilos of garlic. Customs told me I had to pay D25 (about 4 US Dollars) for each bag. I paid and left with my goods."⁴³⁶ When he arrived in The Gambia, he stored his garlic consignment in Faji-Kunda, a town located about 15 kilometers from Banjul and about 3 kilometers from Serekunda.

Each morning I took samples of the garlic to different markets to propose it to condiment sellers in the markets. The following day, I returned with the garlic bags to supply them to interested customers on credit bases. After a week, I returned to collect my monies from them. I had good returns. I had to do this because Dakar has lots of commodities. Sometimes you buy something and bring it there to realise that it was in excessive supply. If you do not act fast you might incur losses in your trade.⁴³⁷

Sow's trading adventure is a fitting example of how the border effect has underpinned livelihoods of people like him. The border makes it possible to exploit economic opportunities that arise across the border.⁴³⁸ Tapping cross-border economic opportunities require knowledge of prevailing economic conditions in both The Gambia and Senegal. This knowledge has made it possible for Sow to buy garlic bags from Senegal and take them to The Gambia, where there was shortage of supply. Moreover, the ease with which he conducts his business dealings in a "foreign" country shows that he feels a sense of belonging to the country. He interacts with his clients, he has allies across different levels of society and he trusts to sell his goods on credit basis. His cross-border networks act as a source of information and security for his trading activities. But the padding his cross-border ties provide for his trading activities may be hindered, if he is unfamiliar with state authorities at the border. For example, he recalls that at one occasion,

⁴³⁵ See Nugent, "Border Anomalies..." 2008; Bach, "New regionalism as an Alias..." 2003.

⁴³⁶ Interview with Mohamed Sow, Gibraltá, Dakar, Senegal, 4th May, 2013.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁸ See Nugent, "Border Anomalies..." 2008; Bach, "New regionalism as an Alias..." 2003.

he bought huge quantities of Lipton tea from The Gambia and tried crossing with them into Senegal.

Senegalese customs insisted that I must have a health certificate issued by the Veterinary Department. The certificate authorised people to import foodstuffs into Senegal and ensured that no expired food come into the country. The Douanes insisted that without it my teabags will not enter Senegal...It was a tough one for me and I had to get the paper before I could cross with them.⁴³⁹

Sow is a Senegalese citizen, but his trading ties seemed to be stronger across the border, as shown by the initial difficulty he encountered, when he tried to take his teabags to Senegal. We can compare the ease with which he took his garlic consignment from Senegal to The Gambia, to the difficulty he had bringing his teabags into Senegal, his own country. Like Senegal, The Gambia also requires people who want to import food into the country to obtain health certificates and clearance, in order to do so. But there is no indication that Sow had any prior authorisation from Gambian authorities to bring his garlic consignment into the country. He did pay tax on his goods before they were allowed entry into The Gambia. But paying tax is different from obtaining authorisation to bring foodstuff into the country. Given his adventurous trading pattern, it can be assumed that Sow may not always have the required documentation needed for the cross-border entry of his goods. But this was no obstacle to his trading activities in The Gambia. As it would be seen later, he has extensive ties with Gambian state authorities and consequently those ties help secure his trading activities across different levels of the state and in society.

The interaction between Sow and the border agent who insisted on going by the rule is interesting. Perhaps, this particular state agent had the option to do an “under the table transaction” with Sow, in order to let his goods pass. But he chose to follow the law. This example of ethical uprightness in upholding the law is part of the less interrogated nuances

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

about the practices and motivations of African state agents.⁴⁴⁰ For example, when I interviewed some of the cross-border traders about corruption at the border crossing points, some of them shared interesting perspectives on the issue. Tamsir Dieng, a male Senegalese textiles trader at the Kaolack central market explained to me that many a times, border enforcement agents are motivated by cultural values, nationalism, or by some other consideration and not corruption. He explained that:

Senegalese customs are good. When I am crossing with my merchandise, I do not necessarily have to know them for them to do their job right. Occasionally, they give you discounts on what you should pay. You can negotiate with them. What poses as difficulty for us is not crossing the border with goods. Instead, it is travelling along the roads after crossing the border. You come across uncountable random checkpoints especially when going to Banjul. You drive into these checkpoints almost blindly. The people manning them ask you for your papers that are all valid and alright for passage. But they would make you pay some ghostly fee. They always find fault with something. They know you are a trader, you do not want your time to be wasted. So you give them whatever amount they asked for, just to make sure that you have a smooth passage. These people have a right to ask you to unload all your merchandise for verification. In order to avoid them from wasting your time, you just give them what they want and you go on your way. I know the money does not go to government coffers. It goes to individual pockets. You do not demand receipts for those monies. As a trader, I am willing to pay any reasonable amount that can give me smooth travel on the road.⁴⁴¹

Dieng identifies two kinds of state agents who have different motivations for doing their jobs. The first kind is the one who purely acts to ease cross-border trade and border crossing in Senegambia. He uses his discretion and offers discounts on custom duties and eases border crossing rules (see chapter 2). He does not make any financial gains from this discretionary enforcement of rules. The logic that motivates this person is that when traders pay less duty on their goods, society will also pay less on those goods, all things being equal. Unrestrictive border crossing increases cross-border mobility and contact, which result to various social and economic benefits to society.⁴⁴² Border agents who show social consciousness in their

⁴⁴⁰ For more on the norms of the state, see Tom De Herdt and Jean-Pierre De Sardan, edited. *Real Governance and Practical Norms in Sub-Saharan Africa, The game of the rules* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

⁴⁴¹ Interview with Tamsir Dieng, Kaolack, Senegal, 16th May, 2013.

⁴⁴² Meagher, 'The Hidden economy...1990.

work are sensitive about cross-border bonds. They are different from colleagues who seek to advance their personal interests through their work. Dieng notes that those people are mostly stationed on the cross-border routes. They exploit cross-border traders to enrich themselves. The distinction between these two types of border agents alludes to variations in the practices of state agents and in society's understandings of the practices of state agents.⁴⁴³

As people interact with state institutions and state agents, corruption may mean different things to different people. For instance, when I asked Dieng's mother to describe her trading experiences and her interactions with state border agents across both sides of the border, she noted that in her 20 years of cross-border trading, she considers cross-border trading as simple and straightforward:

It is about buying merchandise, taking them through customs and bringing them over to our shop here in Kaolack. Between The Gambia and Senegal we have no difficulties. It is expensive to get goods locally in Senegal. That is why we go to Banjul to make more profit. The main problem we encounter as traders is with those you meet along the road. They want to check your goods. If you do not want to be delayed, you give them something and then they check your papers and let you go.⁴⁴⁴

Dieng's mother's response validates his views that state border agents on the cross-border routes are problematic. But her response also indicates a subtle complicity between state border agents and cross-border traders. The latter willingly bribes the former in order for their goods to have smooth transit. If the actions of traders are appreciated without any form of ethics, it can be argued that, by bribing the agents to let their goods pass, traders creatively respond to some of the risks associated with the cross-border transit of goods in Senegambia. These risks include unnecessary delays on the road that can harm perishable goods, general waste of time, or the confiscation of goods, among other things.

⁴⁴³ Herdt and De Sardan, *Real Governance ... 2015*.

⁴⁴⁴ Interview with Tamsir Dieng's mother, Kaolack, Senegal, 16th May, 2013.

But this creative response to the hardships on the routes, created a host of challenges for interstate relations in Senegambia. Transporters use corruption on the interstate routes as one of their major queries in their campaign (see chapter 3 & 4). Unlike transporters' claims, the accounts of Dieng and his mother reveal that corrupt road practices exist on both sides of the border. This begs the question; what barred Senegalese transporters from complaining about corrupt practices on Senegalese routes, during their campaign about the cross-border routes? Transporters' failure to fight corrupt road practices across the board intimates the complex nature of state-society relations and interstate tensions over the border.

But as Dieng noted, there are other things that influence the attitudes of both state and non-state actors on the cross-border routes. For instance, superstition can shape the way people behave in spaces like the border. Senegambians consider borders as part of the "wilderness." Different people - "unknown" persons or "strangers", the good, the mysterious, the vengeful, and charitable individuals all converge at such places.⁴⁴⁵ Falling foul of any of these individuals could sometimes have costly outcomes. Therefore, one has to take precautions in order not to fall prey to the dangers of the border. These precautions involve showing good behaviour, empathy respect, courtesy and consideration, to all people encountered in that "wilderness." Both state and non-state actors can respond to these kinds of social prescriptions and adopt attitudes that may ignore state laws.

The way superstitious beliefs can shape behaviour is similar to the effects behaviour restraining social prescriptions can have on an individual's attitude in society. Such restraints can make individuals in position of power or privilege, to adopt conciliatory attitudes towards rules or regulations, if they think their implementation can have adverse effects on individuals. In that case, such an individual may undercut rules to lessen the perceived burden their implementation can have on individuals. In turn, such a person

⁴⁴⁵ For the roles superstition plays in African social life see Peter Geschiere, *Witchcraft, Intimacy, and Trust, Africa in Comparison* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013).

is considered to gain blessings, a divine reward, for his omission. However, that blessing may not come as an immediate reward, but it can be deferred for the future, at a time when one needs it most.⁴⁴⁶

Social thoughts that prescribe social attitudes are embedded in Senegambia social and religious values. They come from the belief that good behaviour is rewarded and a bad one is sanctioned, there is an afterlife, there is retribution, evil exists and the supernatural world is real. These forces can either positively or negatively affect the lives of individuals.

Thus, state agents can bend rules for non-monetary incentives. They can be motivated by the desire to show hospitality (*teranga*), empathy (*yeremandi*) and assistance (*ndimabal*), especially if they interact with vulnerable people. Cross-border traders can fit the vulnerable category since they travel through isolated places and long distances in search of their livelihoods. Like social thoughts that prescribe hospitality to the displaced, these values can strengthen social relations and create *wullere* and *dome-ndeye* ties in society.

Irrespective of these social prescriptions and from various accounts about cross-border routes, there are state border agents who are not deterred by these social prescriptions. But that does not dilute the social significance of these prescriptions in Senegambian society. Instead, they are like the border; different people respond to them in different ways.

Below, I re-produce Mam Hawa Saho's educative description of some of the social and religious values that guide cross-border traders in Senegambia. The values also help them to creatively respond to challenges on the cross-border routes and to trade-related tensions. Her narration starts with her memories of crossing into The Gambia from Senegal to buy goods.

During the days I went to Gambie to buy goods, I left Dakar and travelled to Banjul mostly through Karang. But occasionally, I passed through the Keur Ayib-Farrafenni borders. As someone coming from Dakar and not going beyond Banjul to Casamance, the former route was shorter and better for me. The days I spent on each trip depended on the time of the month. For example, I spent more days in Banjul (around ten days or so) if I travelled there around mid- month.

⁴⁴⁶*Ibid.*

I bought a selection of goods from different merchants including Lebanese and Mandinka traders in Banjul. When the merchandise was enough for a full truckload, I hired a truck to cross with them on the ferry before taking them to Karang. But sometimes, it proceeded with them to Kaolack. I used to take Gambian transport from Banjul to cross the goods and take them to Karang. From Karang, I used Senegalese transport to take them to Dakar. I was also using Senegalese trucks that routinely travelled to Banjul taking *concrete* (*beton* and stones for construction) to Serekunda. On their return to Dakar, I hired them to transport my goods. I knew these truckers from the ferry. So anytime I saw them around, I approached them to check if on their return journey, they could take my goods to Dakar. We negotiated the price, I gave them the goods and they travelled with them to Dakar.

At Karang, I obtained what we called an “escort” and a declaration of the merchandise I had with me from the *Douanes*, which enabled the goods to travel all the way to Dakar without being stopped or inspected by other *douanes* along the road.

I was dealing mainly in textiles. However, occasionally people asked me to buy them shoes. Or sometimes, they gave me cartons of shoes to transport along with my goods back to Senegal. But I was paid for including their goods in mine. The people who gave me their things to transport for them trusted me like the way I trusted that the truck drivers would deliver my goods in Dakar by themselves. One thing you learn as a cross-border trader is that you don’t need to have much prior information about an individual to trust him with your goods. This is because they dared not take your things like that. They know that they can have problems over stealing or being dishonest with people’s goods. No one wants problems. For example, at the least you can take someone to the police for inappropriate action with your goods. This could delay someone’s time.

The way goods were transported was very reliable and fast. But this is no longer the case. Younger people have replaced our generation of cross-border traders to Banjul. These people still bring truckloads of textiles from Banjul but things have been different with them. These people are also Senegalese and some of them are based in The Gambia doing business. But things are generally different now as you can see that the ferries constantly break down and transporters constantly block the borders. But as traders all we need to do is to negotiate these constraints well in order to be able to carry on our trade. ⁴⁴⁷

The border makes cross-border trading a reflective process for traders. Based on different realities, a trader has to make conscious decisions on various aspects of his or her trading initiatives. Saho uses different routes to go to The Gambia based on route realities at any given moment. Additionally, she had to make decisions on the ideal time and duration for each travel. She also had to strategise on how to bring her goods from Banjul to Dakar through the border. She has to collaborate with people for every aspect of her trading. Therefore, if she achieved her final goals of

⁴⁴⁷ Interview with Mam Hawa Saho, *Marché Gambie*, Dakar, Senegal, 29th May, 2013.

getting her goods to Dakar without any hardships, then it means her collaboration with people has been successful. This collaboration means making use of state and non-state resources to navigate the different challenges associated with cross-border trading. She uses creativity and contingency to opt for what works best for a given moment.⁴⁴⁸

Other people also depend on Saho to advance their trading. They entrust her with their goods for her to transport for them. Similarly, she entrusts her goods to transporters and they take them for her. The traders she carries goods for, are her competitors. They all buy the same goods from the same sources for reselling to the same market. But Saho and her competitors learn to accommodate each other's business interests. She views that unethical practices on the trading routes can be punishable through the intervention of the police. But in fact, when she says: "no one wants problems," she alludes to the possibility of using supernatural means to punish dishonesty. This implies traders can develop trust-based relations as they self-regulate in their trading encounters. Self-discipline is therefore another important value in cross-border trading, especially where intergenerational dynamics can potentially affect what different individuals value, given their circumstances.

Trading is a dynamic process and intergenerational dynamics affect trading practices. The younger generation that has taken over from Saho's generation faces new challenges, such as, frequent ferry breakdowns and frequent border closures. But they creatively respond to these challenges. Instead of the ferry, they use boats to carry their goods. They go to Mali and other West African countries instead of depending on goods from The Gambia alone.

From accounts by Sow, Dieng, his mother and Saho, cross-border trading requires dynamism, compromise, knowledge and willingness to depend on both state and non-state actors, to advance one's trading

⁴⁴⁸ Meagher, 'The Hidden economy...1990.

interests. Consequently, traders are not interested in perpetuating conflict or tension. Cross-border traders are avid strategists. Hence, they can switch their trading goods, routes or even the people they work with, at any given time. But even if they routinely change their strategies, they endeavour to maintain existing relations for future needs. Irrespective of inter-trader competition, they accommodate each other's interests and they become both allies and competitors in their vocation. Unlike transporters, cross-border traders view the state as an ally and they seek to lobby it to foster their interests. In the next section, we explore other aspects of trader –state relations.

6.6.1: Tolerating and Depending on the State

The state of the ferries on The Gambia River affects cross-border trading and mobility. Consequently, Senegalese transporters' dissatisfactions with the ferries and the interstate routes lead them to close the border on The Gambia, as they seek a resolution to their queries (see chapters 3 & 4). But traders found new ways of circumventing Banjul's bad ferries, without antagonising The Gambian state.

Ndeye Sagarr Mbaye is a middle-aged cross -border textiles trader from Kaolack. Her husband, who lives in the USA, provided the capital for her trading. Trading helps her adjust to his absence. It also energises her roles as a mother and home carer.⁴⁴⁹ She travels to The Gambia “every week, or twice, or thrice in a week to buy goods from there.”⁴⁵⁰ She makes significant profit from cross-border trading. Like other traders, she depends on her family's trading networks to advance her trading interests. Trader's networks help them to find new ways of handling situations that challenge their interests.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁹Interview with Ndey Sagarr Mbaye, Kaolack, Senegal, 16th May, 2013. On average Senegalese textiles traders took about 1 million CFA francs on each trading trip to The Gambia.

⁴⁵⁰*Ibid.*

⁴⁵¹ Also see Walther, “Trade networks ...” 2014.

Mbaye and her colleagues opted to use wooden canoes and labour hands called *Baranyinis* to transport their goods from Banjul to Karang, to avoid bad ferries. *Baranyini* is a Mandinka term for men who do hard, manual tasks for other people, for an agreed fee. They come from different ethnic groups and from different West African countries. Some of them also work as boatmen, who transport people from Banjul to Barra. According to Mbaye, *Baranyinis* collect their textile stocks, pack them in huge sewn bundles, load them on the boats and transport them from Banjul to Barra. From Barra, hired trucks escort the goods to the border crossing *poste* in Karang. Then, they are cleared through customs and the *Baranyinis'* portage services end.

This “new” way of transporting cross-border trade goods implies traders tolerate the failures of the state to provide adequate and reliable ferry services to the public.⁴⁵² This derives from the fact that cross-border traders are more disposed to establishing patron-client relations with state authorities than transporters, since good trader-state agent relations serves traders' interests.⁴⁵³

Cross-border traders trade in goods that have substitutes and elastic demand. They make profit from their trading by buying goods cheaply on one side of the border and then selling them at a higher price, usually below the market price, on the other side of the border.⁴⁵⁴ It is reasonable that they can deal with state agents on their own terms, to advance their trading careers.⁴⁵⁵ Unlike traders, transporters' services have inelastic demand and are indispensable in society. Mobility is part of people's everyday existence. Therefore, transporters have power and can flex their muscles to state authorities without hurting themselves. So, it is logical that traders use their

⁴⁵² Ndey Sagarr Mbaye, Kaolack, Senegal, 16th May 2013.

⁴⁵³ Brenda Chalfin, *Neoliberal Frontiers, Ethnography of Sovereignty in West Africa* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

⁴⁵⁴ Nugent, “Border Anomalies...” 2008.

⁴⁵⁵ Chabal and Daloz. *Africa Works... 1999*.

creativity to navigate their relationship with state authorities, even if those relations leave untidy impressions of their ties to state authorities. Sow's trading activities sometimes indicate what seems like a questionable link with state authorities. However, as a typical patron (state)-client (trader) relationship in Senegambia, it has some instructive lessons about traders' and state agents' behaviour.

Through his adventurous, calculative cross-border trading strategy, Sow has become a vendor for state institutions in The Gambia. As his trade in different goods evolved, he started selling fashionable traditional clothes to government employees in The Gambia, on a credit basis. "These are mostly women's clothes. But in each consignment, I include few clothes for men. I buy textiles and contract some tailors in Senegal to sew them, for sale in Banjul."⁴⁵⁶ At a minimum, he took about 50 clothes per trip to Banjul, where his Gambian business partners sold the clothes on credit in government offices and other places. At the end of the month, they collect the payments, take their commission from the amount and return the rest of the money to Sow. His relation with his Gambian partners is dependable. They can do their business transactions via intermediaries. For example, he can send clothes to them through third parties from Dakar and they can sell them in Banjul, take their commission and return the rest of the money to him through an intermediary. Sow's clothing business was successful. He diversified his trading activities to become a vendor of office supplies, for various government departments and public institutions.

This is how Sow became a government vendor. Once, The Gambia Ports Authority (GPA) was contracted by The Gambia Government Printers, for them to produce calendars for them. The Government Printers sub-contracted part of the work to Sow. Subsequently, he received another

⁴⁵⁶Interview with Mohamed Sow, Gibralta, Dakar, Senegal, 4th May, 2013. Mohamed's cross-border trading record includes trading in shoes, clothes, garlic, Lipton tea bags, printers, and plastic bags.

contract to produce calendars and diaries for Kanilai Bakeries, a subsidiary branch of President Jammeh's Kanilai Family Farms Company.

Sow is officially a sub-contractor for the Government Printers, which sub-contracts part of its printing contracts to him. At the time of my interview with him, Sow, who now describes himself as a cross-border Marketing Communication vendor, was in the process of registering himself as a government vendor and contractor in Banjul. As part of that job, he does on-demand printing jobs for government offices, supplies them with office supplies and computer hardware and printers. He also runs a sign-shop.

Sow's logic for registering a trading company in The Gambia is that: "Offices in the Gambia have been doing business with me for some time now. They have advised me that, in order for me to have better business with them, I need to register as a local company."⁴⁵⁷ The Gambian state has become his major client. His associates were guiding him on how he could circumvent national laws that can limit his ability to set up the kind of business he wanted to set up. He is going to be resident in The Gambia and plans to marry a Gambian wife, to strengthen his trading ties with the government. His trading company will also work as contractors to supervise construction projects. It will also expand its information technology and office equipment and supplies trading.

There are many things that The Gambia does not have. My company can provide most things they need to get from outside the country. I usually bring samples for the orders that are placed with me. Then the buyer is given the choice to select the item that best suits his needs and then I would go back to Senegal to get the supply for the chosen item.⁴⁵⁸

Sow considers himself as a "saviour" who provides or can provide many things that The Gambia government needs, but cannot find in the country. Ironically, Senegalese businesses like Sow's have reversed The Gambian re-export fantasy.

Sow's patron-client links with The Gambian state resonates with Mbembe's view that in Africa, individual business people establish enterprises, which get closely tied to the state patronage systems to feed

⁴⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁸*Ibid.*

from the state.⁴⁵⁹ Sow's business feeds from the Gambian state. His associates insulate him from competition. However, he disagrees that the monopoly he enjoys with the Gambian state is corruption. He argues that "trading has no borders. A trader cultivates different clientele bases. That is where success comes from."⁴⁶⁰ For him, trading with The Gambia government is the same like trading with individuals. A trader's concern is finding a market and getting profit from his activities. Where a trader finds a market, does not matter, according to him.

Irrespective of his close ties to the Gambian state, Sow has been affected by The Gambia's bad ferries problem. According to him, from the year 2000, developments in cross-border transport have hindered cross-border trading. But as a trader, he aims to lessen the negative impact these problems can create for his clients.

The unified transport link created a convenient transport system, which made Senegalese and the Gambians to interact intimately. You found both Senegalese and Gambian cars at Barra garage. I remember in those days when I get off the ferry I took my transport from Barra, right there near the ferry terminal. The interstate bus service was also wonderful for cross-border travelers especially for those who did not travel with merchandise. I boarded the bus service from Banjul to Dakar. If you crossed with even the first ferry of the day in the morning you found the bus waiting for passengers from the ferry. The bus people called to passengers "here is the bus to Dakar," and passengers flocked to the bus in their numbers. Sometimes it waited for the second and third ferries of the morning before it departed for Dakar. Once, I took the bus and when we arrived at the border customs had to inspect the goods I was carrying with me on the bus. It left me there even though I paid my fares to Dakar. The bus company had a policy that they would not delay other passengers if one passenger happened to be held up by customs at the border. That was why they did not like carrying traders with goods on the bus. In fact, before you got into the bus, the conductors would announced that people who had goods to be declared at customs must not join the bus because the stop over at customs was brief and there was no time for long customs procedures. People like me ignored their warnings and got into the bus. However, if you ran into difficulties with customs, it left you behind. That was the risk we took. It was a very fast transport system, which if there were no problems along the route took five to six hours to get to Dakar from Banjul. For my journeys to Banjul from Dakar, I went to the Dakar ports around 7am to take the 8am bus to Banjul. Sometimes, you got to your destination under five hours. But all that changed from the year 2000 onwards when The Gambia-Senegal borders were repeatedly closed for reasons no one understood. And now here we are, Senegalese cars load passengers from the Senegalese border. Gambians cars end at their border too.

⁴⁵⁹ Achille Mbembe, "At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality, and Sovereignty in Africa" (translated by Steven Randall), *Public Culture* 12 (1) (2012).

⁴⁶⁰ Interview with Mohamed Sow, Gibralt, Dakar, Senegal, 4th May, 2013.

As cross-border traders, transportation has become our greatest nightmare between The Gambia and Senegal. I celebrated the former system when it was in place. I was very sad to watch it break-up and now we traders bear the full burden of that break-up. But we found ways to make our customers happy by getting them the goods they needed on time.⁴⁶¹

Sow's nostalgic account of how the joint transport network made life easy on both sides of the border, considers traders as the greatest victims of the break-up of that convenient transport network. However, traders like Sow would rather let other people to challenge government on cross-border transport complications. Like Mbaye and other traders, Sow explores other ways of reliably transporting his goods across the border. He will not take any chance to antagonise the Gambian state. Therefore, he uses private transport companies to transport his goods.

A cross-border merchandise transport company opened an office at the *Tefess* area of the Albert market. Interested customers or traders contact the office, for them to move their goods across the border. The merchandise company has a fleet of lorries and trucks for this purpose. It also handles the customs clearance of goods for clients. Upon arrival in Dakar, the transported goods are delivered to their owners. Traders can either pay their service fees upfront or upon the delivery of the goods.⁴⁶²

Various other business opportunities also germinated from cross-border transport tensions, the ferry problems and the interstate border disputes. For these businesses, interstate tensions over the border, is productive. The border conflicts create new needs and new ways of satisfying such needs. There was a need for something like the *Jakarta* at the Karang-Amdallai border and it was fulfilled (see chapter 5). In fact, as border disputes recurred, delays with the ferries and ferry breakdown became more common, people usually get stranded at the border at night.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶² *Ibid.* Charges included transport cost, handling fees and duties and taxes to customs.

Such stranded travelers need sleeping spaces since they cannot cross the border after allowed hours. Businesses opened to respond to their needs.⁴⁶³

From 1994, there were political restrictions on the time people can be allowed to cross the border at night. When running on its normal schedule, the ferry stops its services by 10.00pm daily. On its longest runs, operations cease at mid-night. Additionally, border customs services close at night. Some Karang residents bought mattresses and put them up for hire, for the night, at the border post. Since the offices of the border administrators are closed during these times, people who hired mattresses, to place them in front of these premises, to sleep on them. A mattress can be hired for about 500 CFA francs, for the night. At dawn, they were collected and stored for the day, until the following night.⁴⁶⁴ A male relative of mayor Ousmane Sene who lives in Portugal, stretched further Karang's mattress for hire by night business idea. He constructed a motel by the border. It has many small huts, which are rented out to border crossers and other people who want more privacy than the mattress for hire option offered, for sleeping at the border. The cost for a hut was between 2500 to 5000 CFA francs.⁴⁶⁵

Other informal trading opportunities also cropped up in both Karang and Farrafenni, where small catering businesses that sell roasted or cooked meat operate. Eating meat on cross-border routes becomes a ritual for many hungry travelers. The meat sellers are mostly male youth, who carry in charcoal-powered ovens and mobile metal cooking stoves, their cooked or roast meat delicacies.

Karang's roast meat market shares some features with the trading of textiles at Banjul's *Roohe Diskett*. Meat sellers work with sales agents who run after travelers, who arrive at the border. Like the sales agents at *Roohe Diskett*, they use flowery language and hound travelers through the maze of other competitors, to a patron-meat seller's stand. But like most of these trading initiatives I've already discussed, even the selling of roast or cooked

⁴⁶³ Interview with Mayor Ousmane Sene, Karang, Senegal, 12th February, 2013.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

meat at the border, depended on the state. State authorities have the power to control or outlaw many activities around the border, but they let them be.

The border fosters co-existence and creativity. It carries a special attraction for businesses, people and state authorities. It is a growth area and as such, businesses can mushroom around the border, especially if it has good road networks and transport facilities. Senegambian businesses tend to set up around border areas with proper garage facilities and a highway that runs across both sides of the border. The presence of good road networks helped businesses like cashew trading in Karang, to grow.⁴⁶⁶ Women of the town sell roasted cashew nuts in plastic bags of different sizes for different prices. These nuts are also a popular delicacy at Banjul's Albert Market, where traders sell them, too. Mayor Sene noted that the cashew trade has been a long-standing feature of cross-border economic exchange between The Gambia and Senegal. He stated that:

I spent twenty-two years in Karang but even before my family's arrival here, the cashew trade has been long in existence. Our women take roasted cashew nuts from here to Banjul. After selling them, they buy other goods from Banjul to bring them to Karang for their mothers to sell in small stalls. Alternatively, the women themselves could sell them in those stalls.⁴⁶⁷

As Sene viewed, the cross-border movement of goods has been part of the daily existence of border communities, who survive from the "integrated cross-border economy." This economy keeps flowing even if The Gambia-Senegal bilateral relations are frosty.⁴⁶⁸

Traders who trade in both licit and illicit goods shun confrontations with the state. They navigate political constraints with less adversarial tendencies towards the state or towards fellow traders. They follow the profit and they establish and sustain inter-personal connections. They value compromise. From the individual logics of the trader, stability is important for

⁴⁶⁶ Karang is located in a cashew production zone.

⁴⁶⁷ Interview with Mayor Ousmane Sene, Karang, Senegal, 12th February, 2013.

⁴⁶⁸ Wolfgang Zeller, "Danger and Opportunity in Katima Mulilo: A Namibian Border Boomtown at Transnational Crossroad," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, 1 (2009), 138.

them to advance their trading interests. And if stability is at the cost of redefining their beliefs to accommodate other people, then so be it.

Cross-border trading is like an art. As such, traders have to continuously exercise their creativity in order for them to tackle the everyday challenges of their occupation. This is why traders exhibit a liberal attitude towards some deep-rooted social practices. For example, trading activities like meat selling modify gender roles. To have a man cook food, for other people, is uncommon in Senegambia. However, at the border, male cooking has become an acceptable norm to the cooks themselves and to travelers who buy their food. Women control the cashew nut trade. In the textiles trade, they also control the major trading activities and men depend on them like in *Marche Gambie*. These realities make cross-border trading a dynamic enterprise. Traders creatively respond to economic and other forms of constraints. They exploit the tools they have in the state, in culture, trade and in other resources, to advance their trading. The next section explores currency trading at The Gambia-Senegal border, to give more examples of how traders effectively manage conflict, depend on the state and forge partnerships, to advance their trading interests across the border. It also reveals other motivations that can shape the behaviour of state agents at the border.

Figure 7: Inside a typical trading store



Shoes and textiles sold in Dakar with both local and cross-border clientele base, source: Author, field work photos, May 2013.

6.6.2: “Friendship with Border Agents”: Informal Currency Exchangers

The Karang-Amdallai and the Farrafenni-Keur Ayib borders sustain many homes, families and individuals in Senegambia. Borders have benefits and endless business ideas can grow from them.⁴⁶⁹ Since the year 2000, traders in the informal sector managed to establish an illicit foreign currency parallel market at both the Karang-Amdallai and Farrafenni-Keur Ayib borders. These foreign exchange traders change both local and international currencies right before the very nose of the border police. They co-exist with other border economic actors, such as, men with *push-push*, who carry loads for a fee, the *Jakarta* drivers, *clando* taxi drivers, water sellers, cashew-nut traders, meal sellers, cell phone sim card and credit sellers, shops and canteens sitting right on the border line.

I explore the life story of Mohamed Diop, a male foreign currency trader at the Karang-Amdallai border, to reveal how the border foreign currency trade works and depends on the state and how traders productively deal with conflicts and use various resources to advance their illicit foreign currency trading.

Diop is a Senegalese citizen. He started his border currency trading in 2003. He started trading in foreign currencies in 1994. He trades in the following currencies: The Gambian dalasi, Senegalese CFA franc, the US dollar, British Pound Sterling and the Euro. He also sells mobile phone credits for *Orange*, *Tigo*, *Africell* and *Gamcel*.⁴⁷⁰

Diop acts as an “another eye” for the Senegalese border agents at Karang. As a spy, he gathers information and pays attention on behalf of the police, while trading currencies or going about other businesses at the border. The police give him protection in return for his services. For someone who moves at the border with huge amounts of cash stuck in his

⁴⁶⁹Alexander C. Diener and J. Hagen, *Borders, A Very Short Introduction*. London. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

⁴⁷⁰The first two are Senegalese cell phone carriers and the last two are Gambian ones.

pockets and bag, Diop needs that protection. His spy services to the police partly influence his work schedule. He works two shifts daily, from 8.00am to 8.00pm and from 2.00am to 6.00am, respectively. The first shift falls within the “high flow” traffic period at the border. At the end of that shift, he returns home to Barra, where his Gambian wife and child live. He takes a two-hour nap and then returns to the Karang border at 2.00am, for the second shift. Diop rents a room in Karang, and in-between his two shifts, he uses it for breaks and to rest.⁴⁷¹

Throughout the days I spent at the Karang border, I watched and listened to Diop as he shared stories, jokes and lunch with the Senegalese border police. I enquired from him why he and other currency dealers and shopkeepers at the border, seemed to have a close friendship with both Gambian and Senegalese border agents at Amdallai and Karang. He replied that the border could be a very insecure place. As traders who have lot of cash on them, they need the police's protection. “Shops that you see here at the border operate twenty-four hours. They sell day and night. All of us need the police to protect us from bandits that frequent the border.”⁴⁷²

It was intriguing that border police tolerated and protected the foreign currency dealers at the border. The official policies of both The Gambia and Senegalese governments outlawed the operation of non-licensed foreign exchange businesses like Diop's. Both governments have a history of uncompromisingly clamping down on these informal parallel money markets in urban parts of their country. However, right in front of the Amdallai-Karang police and customs border agency premises, moneychangers looking for customers, roam up and down the vicinity with small leather bags clutched under their arms or tightly belted around their waist.⁴⁷³ I further interrogated Diop on why the police seemed to deliberately ignore state policy on the operation of unlicensed foreign exchange businesses at the border. He

⁴⁷¹Interview with Mohamed Diop, Money Changer, Karang, Senegal, 18th May, 2013.

⁴⁷²*Ibid.*

⁴⁷³ See Kate Meagher, “The Hidden Economy: Informal and Parallel Trade in Northwestern Uganda,” *Review of African Political Economy* 17, no. 47 (1990), 64–83.

replied that the police action was based on a humanitarian and practical understanding that, “these was what these people do to survive, feed their families and take care of their other responsibilities in life.”⁴⁷⁴ This resonates with Dieng’s view that border customs agents show solidarity to traders and they sometimes bend the rules for them, for purely humanitarian reasons.

This anecdote on the good relations between traders and the border agents did not mean that cross-border trading at The Gambia-Senegal border was a conflict -free venture. The next section touches on some of the rivalries and tensions I observed during my fieldwork. But traders creatively contained the tensions to advance their mutual interests.

6.6.3: “Women are a Hindrance:” Currency Dealers in Karang

Diop has hinted that the cross-border currency trade was a risky venture, hence, traders lobby protection from the police. Traders depend on the state authorities at the border to carry on their trade. But the relationship between the two actors is not conflict-free. The police get drawn into tensions that come from inter-trader competition. They also get involved in other forms of interpersonal tensions at the border. The border foreign currency market is therefore rife with tension, like the cross-border transport sector (see chapter 4 & 5).

For Diop, some of the tensions in the cross-border currency market have to do with the women currency traders. According to him, when he came to the border in 2003, to start trading there, he met a handful of women moneychangers already in business. By 2013, their numbers increased to between eighty to a hundred women. Male currency dealers like Diop, describe their female counterparts as overly aggressive in their trading. The women are accused of being in the habit of ignoring “fair” trading norms and they intercept male traders’ customers.

Male currency dealers fault their women colleagues but they may actually be responding to their chauvinistic instincts at seeing women

⁴⁷⁴*Ibid.*

engage in a profession that has traditionally been a domain for men. What they see as an over-aggressive stance from the women may actually be the women's attempt to stand up to them, to prove that they fit the job and can even do it better.⁴⁷⁵ But whatever truth lies behind the gender battles at the border currency market, male currency dealers feel the women push them to a corner and they have no choice, but to cope with the latter's trading attitudes:

Any work that men have to share with women is always difficult. From our experience here, sometimes you see a client and you start negotiating with him/her and then a female currency dealer comes along to snatch him or her from you. When you have a trade argument with her, the client goes to her because she is a woman. We are men and you know God has given women some special gifts ...⁴⁷⁶

Diop's complaints about the women's ingenious negotiation skills resonate with the skills *Jakarta* transporters used to undercut each other during their free-floating fare system. Socially, too, the fact that the women trade in a precarious trading environment attracts social sympathy. There is social awareness that dysfunctional social and economic systems in society have pushed women to become the sole breadwinners for their families. As such, part of the "special gifts" women have is to use that social sympathy to advantage. This has been part of the reasons why the women traders at *Marché Gambie* were unstoppable in their trading. Male traders like Diop recognise the economic and social power women have and therefore, ensure that, their resentment of the women, does not obstruct their ability to collaborate with them, to advance their mutual trading interests. He disclosed that:

Occasionally, we do collaborate with them. You can share clients with some of them. By sharing clients, I mean when I happen to have a customer who needed more currency than I have at hand, I can ask one of my colleagues to supplement the short fall from their money. In return, we share the profit

⁴⁷⁵For African women's social and economic ingenuity see Falola and Amponsah, *Women's roles ...2012*.

⁴⁷⁶ Interview with Mohamed Diop, Money Changer, Karang, Senegal, 18th May, 2013.

we made from that exchange. This is a common practice here. But some of these women are so difficult that you cannot share clients with them.⁴⁷⁷

Male traders prefer to share clients among themselves and the same applies to women traders, too. The latter constituted a solid solidarity group. Nevertheless, when economic opportunities demand it, both genders willingly cross gender lines to collaborate and make more profit for themselves. This resonates with Guyer's observation that trade or the exchange of goods can create alliances among unlike social groups.⁴⁷⁸ By saying that some of the women moneychangers were difficult, Diop expresses his gendered views of the women as well as his distaste over their presence at the border. The women "invaded" what was for a long time considered a male terrain. This has created discomfort to male traders like Diop. But other kinds of divisions also prevail among the traders, which also helped entrench rivalries. For example, majority of the female currency dealers were Senegalese women. But male currency dealers were of a mixed nationality: Senegalese, Gambians and Guineans.

The solidarities and rivalries in the money-exchange business were symbolic of the divisions of the border. The way these two groups of traders occupy their trading space or even move about their trading space indicate subtle tensions in their relations. Women moneychangers tend to converge on a section of the road, away from the offices of the border administrative agents. In contrast, male traders assemble close to the border administrative offices. Some members of the group sit right on the invisible Amdallai-Karang borderline, which separates The Gambia and Senegal. This separation of the genders reinforces social and religious values for the segregation of the genders during social functions, such as funerals, weddings, naming ceremonies, etc. However, the separation between the two groups lacks that social and religious ethos. From their separate location, one could feel the hostility and tension between the two groups,

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁸ Jane I. Guyer, *Marginal Gains: Monetary Transactions in Atlantic Africa* (Lewis Henry Morgan Lecture Series) 1st Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

hence, their separation lacks the respectful distance gender separation during social and religious events, communicate.

Their trading activities and the way they occupy their trading space have turned the border area into a balkanised frontier-trading zone. Inter-personal suspicion and competition are rife as members of the two groups point fingers at each other as the spoiler of the trade they share. Below I share a story demonstrating how these rivalries could be both intense and threatening for members of the two groups.

6.6.4: “Call Us Not “Femmes De La Rue.”

On March 17th, 2013, an angry female Senegalese teacher returned to the Karang border, to lodge a complaint with the Police. According to her, when she crossed to Amdallai on March 16th, 2013, a female and a male moneychanger duped her of three thousand Gambian dalasis. The teacher, who was returning to her post at the French School in The Gambia, changed CFA currencies into Dalasis. After she arrived in Banjul, she realised that she received less money from the two people.⁴⁷⁹

The Police escorted her to the crowd of moneychangers and the woman identified one of them as the culprit. That person was invited for questioning at the Police station but she denied the allegations. However, the police detained her. News of her detention spread fast and a group of women moneychangers invaded the Police station, demanding her release. They informed the police that the “drunkard *Peul* money changer” who shared the client with the detained woman, was the culprit.

The police asked the women to bring the culprit to them, if they want their colleague released. The women dispersed into Karang, to search for the “drunkard *Peul* money changer.” After a futile search for the man, they returned to the Police station to inform the police that the friend of the *Peulman*, who was at that time at the border, should be arrested for him to

⁴⁷⁹ Guyer provides interesting details on how currency circulation works in the Sahel. See Guyer, *Marginal Gains...*2004.

turn in his friend, the suspect. The police obliged and the man took them to his friend's hiding place. The suspect was arrested and his friend was freed. A troop of male moneychangers also came to support their arrested colleague, who confessed to the crime. The suspect folded some of the banknotes he gave to the teacher twice, so that both ends of the notes faced upwards and got counted separately as different notes of the D100 bank note.⁴⁸⁰ The unsuspecting teacher received the change and left. After his confession, the police asked him to return the balance of the money. He also refunded the teacher's fares to and from Banjul-Karang. The police warned the man and then released him.

Feeling vindicated, the women moneychangers who loitered around the Police station while the case was being settled, taunted the teacher for daring to accuse one of them—"the hard-working women feeding on their sweat." In the ensuing war of words, the teacher called the women, "*femmes de la rue*."⁴⁸¹ The group of irate women asked the teacher to "return those words where they came from." There was pandemonium and the female moneychangers shouted back at the teacher saying: "call us not *femmes de la rue*."

The police intervened, shooed away all parties from the station and as the women dispersed, one police shouted after them: "the *Peul* is guilty today, but tomorrow, it will be your turn. This is all you do here."⁴⁸² Infuriated by the words of the police, the women accused the police of being biased in favour of the teacher. They noted to the police that they should thank them, instead of ill-treating them, for they helped them to capture the accused. Meanwhile, the teacher crossed back to Amdallai, to return home. Behind in Karang, people grouped in small numbers, discussing the incident. The freed man went away to nurse himself from his "bad day" with the police.

The anecdote on how the Senegalese teacher recovered her money from a fraudulent moneychanger offers interesting nuances into state-

⁴⁸⁰ For risky in currency circulation see Guyer, *Marginal Gains...* 2004.

⁴⁸¹ The term insinuated that the women were prostitutes or loose, immoral street women.

⁴⁸² A police officer at Karang, Senegal, 17th March, 2013.

society relations and inter-trader cooperation and rivalries. On the one hand, the Police allow an illegal money changing business to flourish at the border under their watch. At the same time, it intervenes to protect a citizen from a fraudulent practice that is associated with that illicit economy.⁴⁸³ It protects moneychangers from potential risks, but the way female and male moneychangers accosted the police to show solidarity to one of their members, implied that, there is a tacit distrust between moneychangers and the police.

The mixed relationship between the two sets of people indicates the co-extension between traders' experiences of the border and the police's understanding of it. Notwithstanding of the contradictions in the relationship between the police and the moneychangers, border communities routinely depend on the state in their day-to day existence. Similarly, state agents at the border also routinely compromise in their work, as their existence also depends on their relationship with border communities. In the next section, I further explore how border communities and even state authorities creatively use various resources at their disposal to navigate the complex context of The Gambia-Senegal border, in an attempt to create continuities across the limitations of territory.

6.7: Consumption and Attitudes Towards the Border

The relationship between border communities and border customs agents offer insightful details about the nuances of state-society relations and the practices and norms of the state.⁴⁸⁴ The cross-border exchange of goods at The Gambia-Senegal border depends a lot on creativity and contingency. Below, I share some observations on how state agents interact with border communities and traders at the Keur Ayib customs post.

⁴⁸³ See Meagher, 'The Hidden economy...1990.

⁴⁸⁴ Bierschenk, "States at Work in West Africa..." 2010, offers interesting details on the attitudes and norms of the state.

On my first day at the Customs office in Keur Ayib, I had to wait to see the *Chef de Bureau of the Douanes*. People streamed in and out of the main doors of the *bureau*, with noticeable leisure. Some of them exchanged social bantering and jokes with the customs agents. A man walked into the office, singing a religious song to himself. I watched piles of haphazardly folded papers clutched in the hands of different individuals, who were processing their commodities through customs. The rustling noise of papers being spread out, the constant movement in and out of the office, the dragging feet on the floor, a small laughter here and there, all gave a sense that people were well acquainted with the *douanes* and they were “happy” with the nature of things at The Gambia-Senegal border. There was no way to differentiate who was Gambian from who was Senegalese, except when they speak in the different local dialects, which were interspersed with words from either French or English. The interactions and the mood within the office also gave a sense that people truly “love” paying taxes and bringing goods from across the border.

Border agents at The Gambia-Senegal borders implicitly recognise that Gambians and Senegalese have developed consumption patterns and preferences linked to cross-border production and exchange. State officials were aware that Senegalese consumers prefer tomatoes, cooking oil, sugar, milk and other products re-exported from The Gambia, to the ones locally produced in Senegal. These goods were routinely “brought” into Senegal. Border enforcement agents “tolerated” or paid a blind eye, as these goods crossed the border. This has been particularly true in Keur Ayib, where livelihoods are tied to the border.

Trading is the main source of livelihood for the majority of people in Keur Ayib. *Chef de Village* Gueye, the chief of Keur Ayib, described the patterns of livelihoods as being: “buying goods from *Gambie*, come to the *douanes* pay duties and bring them over for reselling. Or buy from here, do the *douane* across the border and then go to Farrafenni to sell them. Commerce

happens in both directions of the border—it has *sans contrarier*.⁴⁸⁵ The idea that border residents derive economic and social benefits from the border comes across from Gueye's description.⁴⁸⁶ The “everyday dimensions of border life” are articulated in the two main channels people use to cross with goods from one side of the border to the other.⁴⁸⁷

There is *yunni kaw* which means the road up or the official crossing point for goods. Some people pass through this way only. There is also *yuni suff* or *yunni aalla* which is the back-way, tor the bush path, the unauthorised routes smugglers use. People who deal in goods with restricted entry into Senegal love using the back way. They run with their goods until they arrive at some place, sell them and then go their way.⁴⁸⁸

The recognition of both legal and illegal routes of entry for goods shows the border is a social practice. It is also an economic strategy for residents and the state, which makes economic returns from its border policies. Out of this recognition, Gueye negotiates with state authorities for the release of apprehended smugglers and for the temporary lifting of the band on the entry of controlled, essential goods from The Gambia.

People come to me when their goods are confiscated by the Douanes to ask me to appeal to the douanes for them to return the confiscated goods. But I have a policy on this; I tell them always, if you need something that is found in the *Anglais* come inform me. And then we can check with the Douanes to see what things among the list of goods you want to bring in they could let you bring in and what things you may have to pay duties on. Then, I go with them to the border and they list all that they need and then I ask the douanes to help them. But if people violate this understanding I cannot intervene on their behalf. I make people to be aware of this.⁴⁸⁹

Gueye's close relationship with border enforcement agents limits the extractive dimensions of the border. Thus, it is considered as the significant socio-economic lifeline of Keur Ayib village.⁴⁹⁰ The rent concessions Gueye receives from border agents support his villagers' livelihoods. These concessions recognise the value of the cross-border shared economy and

⁴⁸⁵ Interview with Chef de Village Gueye, Keur Ayib, 13th February, 2013.

⁴⁸⁶ For more on this, see William Allen, “I am From Busia!” : Everyday Trading and Health Service Provision at the Kenya- Uganda Border as Place- Making Activities, “*Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 28: 3, 2013, 291- 306.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 293.

⁴⁸⁸ Interview with Chef de Village Gueye, Keur Ayib, 13th February, 2013.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

⁴⁹⁰ See Allen, “I am from Busia”...2013.

cross-border connections. El Haj Ndiaye, a youth electrician who works in Keur Ayib argued that the border and the customs concessions embody the soul of the shared cross-border economy. As a technician, border residents rely on Ndiaye, to get the electronic goods they need from across the border. They give him cash to purchase items like car batteries, solar panels, solar lamps, wires, tools, screwdrivers, TV sets, radio sets and other electronic goods from The Gambia. After buying these goods, Ndiaye negotiates with border agents, to take the goods to their owners. The “toleration” from customs, makes smuggling such expensive goods unnecessary, since individuals like Ndiaye can pre-arrange permissions for the cross-border transit of these goods.⁴⁹¹ Ndiaye argued that:

The douanes are not a big issue. What they dislike is going to buy your things without taking permission from them. You ask permission to go but a TV set and they will tell you, you can go or you may buy this paper as permission, *daggal, kieti bi*. It has been ten years since I started buying these goods in The Gambia.⁴⁹²

The practice of “toleration” derives from the co-extension between the lives of border residents and those of state border agents. The latter are integrated in the border environment they live in. They procure meals, laundry, housekeeping and other services from local people. Their needs are closely linked with the needs of the community. Consequently, there is also a personal logic to the border agents’ humanitarian considerations that enabled residents of Keur Ayib, to bring controlled goods from The Gambia into Senegal.

Toleration is also accorded to religious communities at the border, for them to bring in in-kind donations for religious events. Most of the goods that cross the border for religious events are generally for consumption during religious events. From the perspective of both complicit border agents and beneficiaries of toleration, the act was not smuggling, but rather, recognition of the blood and kinship ties between Gambians and Senegalese.

⁴⁹¹ Interview with El Haj Ndiaye, Keur Ayib, Senegal, February 13th, 2013.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*

But toleration has exceptions. There was zero tolerance for the entry of medicaments from The Gambia into Senegal. The cross-border movement of medicaments from The Gambia into Senegalese towns and villages has had a long history. The former has lax rules on the import and export of medications and thus, it is a good supplier of medicines for cross-border use.

Pain medicine (for external use like balms and orally-dispensed tablets or syrups), sex stimulants, multivitamins and antibiotics are the four types of medicaments commonly smuggled across the borders. These on-the-street-medical supplies have a huge demand and trading in them is lucrative. Premiaton, for instance, has had a long history of circulation in Senegambian street-markets. It is used for bodybuilding and weight-gain. It has social significance for a society, where, the good life is measured by the plumpness of one's body. Women commonly use it, too. It is also popular with Wrestlers, who need their weight for their sport

Figure 8: List of seized smuggled Commodities at the stores of Keur Ayib Douane 2013

MEDICAMENTS	OTHER ITEMS
Ibuprofen 400 mg	Different kinds of electronics
Paracetamol 500mg	6 bags of cannabis
Hokzole- Mebendazole tables 100mg	Cooking Oil
Premiaton 4mg	Tomatoes paste
Stoppane- General Painkiller	Cloths
Buta Tablets 100mg	Flour bags
Dicloparl 550mg	Sugar
Superpepti, Cyproheptadine Energy 4mg	Shoes
Cold Caps 100mg	Matches (boxes)
Puregrey sildenafil citrate 100mg	Batteries
Vegerra 50mg	
Comcom (similar to super pepti)	

multivitamin tables

Picap capsules 20mg, Piroxicam capsules U.S.P

Amoxillin 200- Antibiotics

Cotrim tables co-trimoxazole tables

The strictness with the passage of medicaments implied the limits to “toleration.” Where the social consequences for the unrestricted entry of certain goods is high, state border agents exercise prudence and are inflexible with the law. Thus, state border agents observe creativity and contingency in implementing the state’s territorial agenda in Senegambia. In the next section, I further explore how toleration works in the fisheries sector, to highlight that there are a variety of areas where state agents and ordinary people cooperate, to enhance their cross-border economic or social agenda.

6.8: Cross-Border Fish Trade: a Gateway to Interstate Political Understanding

The Gambia-Senegal cross-border fisheries sector is another area where, individuals and the state use different resources at their disposal, to mediate the border. The sector feeds from The Gambia-Senegal bilateral relations and it reveals different nuances of state-society relations.

Since 1968, cross-border fish traders, fishermen and women and fishing communities reach out to each other and establish strong partnership collaborations. Through their cohesive relationships, these people effectively lobby the two states to collaborate on cross-border projects, which include the construction of the Kaolack fish market in Senegal and the Brikama fish market in The Gambia. The two governments and the Japanese Development Cooperation (JICA) funded these projects, under a joint-partnership for direct support programmes to fishing communities in The

Gambia and Senegal. Consequently, members of the communities have equal access to both markets and they collaborate in their fishing trade.

Constructed at the cost of about 4 billion and 500 million CFA, The Kaolack fish market supplies the fish needs of the region of Sine Saloume. It also supplies other parts of Senegal and The Gambia, when fish is scarce in the country. The secure market also distributes fish from The Gambia to Senegalese markets. It opens at 4.00am and closes at 12.30pm, daily.

The fish trade largely depends on traders' ability to forge a cooperative relationship with both states. Consequently, they enjoy certain concessions from the state to facilitate their cross-border fisheries trading. The mobility of fish supplies across the border exemplifies how fisheries people use the resources they have in the state and in their communities, to advance their cross-border economic interests. For example, fish is a highly perishable commodity. So, fish trucks coming from both sides of the border enjoy priority crossing on Gambian ferries. The trucks also enjoy priority crossing at the Amdallai-Karang border. The usual time these fish trucks arrive in Kaolack is 5.00pm or 10.00pm, after the market closes. However, as part of the special concession given to them, Gambian fish trucks are allowed to access the market to store their supplies upon their arrival. After arrivals, the fish-trucks and supplies wait until 4.00am, the time the market opens daily, to sell their stock. After the end of the market day, the trucks return to Banjul the same day.

Fish is an important part of the breadbasket of both The Gambia and Senegal. It is a major nutritional resource and key ingredient in the diets of the two populations. It sustains livelihoods and human health on both sides of the border. The fisheries sector is also an enormous source of income for various communities.

In most West African countries like The Gambia and Senegal, the fisheries sector is largely informal. However, it is the backbone of the

national economy.⁴⁹³ It was estimated that The Gambia-Senegal cross-border fish trade was worth over one billion CFA francs annually.⁴⁹⁴

The cross-border fisheries sector encourages cross-border fish trading. But transporting fish requires special forms of transport. Thus, the sector attracts significant donor support, which provides capital-intensive investments for it. Fish traders have access to both state and donor sponsored project-based credit facilities run by financial centres in both countries. They also benefit from government in-kind assistance, which provides equipment and other material support to fishing communities. Through cross-border projects, fish traders can access loans to buy fish trucks, instead of hiring transport to move their stocks, from one side of the border to another. These loans are repaid by installments.

Cross-border fish traders consider themselves as “one” people. They share sociality, a trade, kinship bonds and other ties and are a cohesive community. According to Laity Ndoa, a fish trader and the President of the Kaolack Regional Fish Market, the journey of the fish in the rivers and lakes of Senegambia is an apt metaphor for the interdependence of the cross-border fishing community.

There is a natural pattern to the movement of fish in The Gambia and Senegal rivers. As such, fish supplies in the two rivers alternate, depending on the direction of fish flows. Based on the ecology of both The Gambia and Senegal rivers, fish stocks arrive at these waters from Morocco and Mauritania. The fish flows into the Senegal river first, before proceeding upriver in Gambian waters.

As fish entered the Senegal river, it goes up to Ndar, then to Kayaar before it moved to Jaol and Mbour and from there it enters The Gambia river. But the fish may not spend a long time in the Gambia river before moving into the waters of southern Senegal. From Casamance, it goes to Guinea Bissau before re-routing itself back. Fish goes as far as the end of its journey before returning to its source.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹³ Christophe Béné and Lawton Rebecca “Global Change in African Fish Trade: Engine of Development or Threat to Local Food Security?” IIFET 2008 Vietnam Proceedings, WorldFish Center, 2008.

⁴⁹⁴ Interview with Laity Ndoa, president of the Kaolack Fish Market and Fisher Folks Association, Kaolack, Senegal, 16th May, 2013.

⁴⁹⁵ Interview with Laity Ndoa, Kaolack, Senegal, 16th May, 2013.

As a result of country size and geography, Senegal has a larger fishing zone at sea than The Gambia. Hence, Senegalese fishermen can catch fish that is yet to arrive in The Gambia River. Their ability to intercept the fish before they get into Gambian waters, can cause temporary shortages of fish supplies in Gambian waters.

Ndoa uses the metaphor of the fish to depict the cross-border interdependence of livelihoods and to justify the need for stronger bilateral cooperation between The Gambia and Senegal. He also uses the fish trail as a symbol of the inseparability of the two countries. The metaphors he uses are also part of a widespread practice in which Gambians and Senegalese use metaphors and social idioms of relations, to describe their cross-border ties. The metaphors Ndoa uses are a co-extension of the textile metaphor religious circles use to describe The Gambia-Senegal relations (see chapters 1, 2 & 7). He argued that,

The people are more important than the political border. The governments should ignore the border and follow the people. The two countries share the same father and the same mother. Socially, there are no barriers for any of us for integrating within one community or another on both sides of the border. It should be the responsibilities of both governments to strengthen the people by recognising the ties between the two countries.⁴⁹⁶

Ndoa views that Gambians and Senegalese live in a co-extended social and economic environment, which makes the border an ill-fitting barrier, the two states have maintained. He draws from the metaphor of the mother and the father, to emphasise the close-ties between the two populations. Thus, he re-echoes the views of Imam Dembo Mane of Karang, who stated that *mbokh* ties between the two countries are beyond the reach of politics (see chapters 1 & 2).

⁴⁹⁶*Ibid.*

The fisheries sector uses deep-rooted social and religious narratives about cross-border kinship ties, to foster its economic interests. For example, they develop a cross-border agenda for their members and then present it to state officials. They use the Ministries of Fisheries in both countries, to channel their collective interests and lobby for policies that can advance their mutual interests. Also, they directly communicate with policy-makers and other relevant government officials, to advocate for their interests. Thus, individuals who work as fish traders see their trade as being interdependent on the work of other members of their community. This fact is evident in the way fisher folks understand their community and the work they do. Below, I explore their profiles and trading experiences to highlight how their economic activities and social structures are embedded in community.

6.8.1: A General Profile of Cross-Border Fish Traders

The people engaged in the fish trade can be categorised into the sea-going folks and the post sea-going fish dealers. The first group comprises fishermen. They're mainly male youth, aged between 25-35 years. This age-bracket is suitable for their occupation. Fisher folks consider fishing as an art for the youthful. Sea faring and the long hours spent at sea impose huge physical demands on the individual. This is why able-bodied younger men are considered more suitable for active sea duty.

The sea going fishermen identify a captain among themselves. He leads their fishing excursions. At the end of their fishing expeditions, they return to the shore, to sell their harvests or hand it over to the second group of people –the post sea-going fish dealers. Laity Ndoa belongs to this latter category of traders. He joined the fishing sector in 1968. As a young apprentice, he hanged behind fish trucks and accompanied the master fishers to sea on their fishing boats. He has retired from sea adventures and he now works as a full-time fish dealer.

Ndoa has his own truck. He takes fish supplies on both sides of the border, depending on which side of the border has abundant or scarce

supplies, at given times. As a fish dealer and like most cross-border traders, he, too, follows the profit across the border.

Similar to cross-border trading in Senegambia, ethnicity, unlike capital, has no significant value in the fish trade. However, most people who go to the sea are Sereres, Lebous and / or Wollof. “Between fishing and trading there is no tribe. You don’t have to be this tribe or that, to go to sea or to be a fish seller. If you come to the fishing sector looking for work, you will certainly work, irrespective of who you are or where you come from.”⁴⁹⁷ The fishing sector is ethnicity blind, but the sector has gender specific roles for members of its community.

Women hardly go to sea. They are active in the fish trade and some of them invest in trucks and cooling facilities in order to engage in large-scale cross-border fishing entrepreneurship. But most women are engaged in the dry fish trade, rather than in the fresh fish one.

Dry fish supplies generally come from The Gambia, Casamance or Senegal. The trade in this commodity has been popular in Senegal, Mauritania and in Gambian *lumos*.⁴⁹⁸ Rural communities situated far away from rivers generally find it difficult to get regular supplies of fresh fish because of transportation constraints. They use dry fish as substitute for fresh ones. Dry fish has been a delicacy in both The Gambia and Senegal. It is added to most dishes and it is cooked with fresh fish, to enhance the taste of the food.

There is a subtle gender dimension to the fish trade, but the choice individuals make on whether to engage in the fresh fish or dry fish trade has more to do with financial ability, than gender. Women who can afford a truck, cooling facilities and other capital-intensive materials to engage in the fresh fish trade, can do so. Some women also engage in the retail fresh fish trade, which requires less capital. As a sector that sometimes experiences abundance or scarcity of supplies, the fisheries sector is subject to the vagaries of maritime fish life and therefore community members provide

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid*

⁴⁹⁸ The name means weekly markets in Senegambia.

informal social insurance for each other. They tend to settle together in communities that are known to have great sources of fish supplies, as demonstrated in the next section.

6.8:2. Gambian Sources of Cross-Border Fish Export

The two Gambian coastal villages of Gunjur and Tanji, are the major sources of the fish that go to the Senegalese market. Huge fishing communities live in both settlements. Fishing has been the main source of livelihood for residents in both places, too. Bakau, another major fishing city in The Gambia also supplies the cross-border market. The most popular varieties of fish in the cross-border market are locally known as *yabou*, *sharka* and *sedda*.

Trading in fish demands lot of strategic thinking, according to Laity Ndoa. For example, at any given time, fish sellers have to decide on the market they would sell their fish at, except for those who sell at local levels for the daily consumption of local people. There are factors, which influence a fish traders' decision to sell his stock in Kaolack or in Dakar. Fish stocks that arrive in Kaolack are usually sold in the town and its environs. Part of the stock can also be transported further to Dakar. But this depends on whether that stock is for export through the Leopold Sedar Senghor Airport in Dakar, or for Dakar markets. This depends on the goals of the trader. For example, if a trader wants rapid, fast turnover in order to return to The Gambia on the same day, or the following day, he/ she will sell his stock in Kaolack. In contrast, those who seek to make more profit, take their supplies to Dakar. They usually sleep over in the city, and return to Banjul the following day. Irrespective of the destination of cross-border fish supplies, cross-border fish traders thrive through community and cooperation. Cross-border communication is core to their trading successes and the thriving of their communities, as shown in the next section.

Figure 9: Inside a fishing truck at the Kaolack Fish Market



A fish truck unloading some of its stock, Kaolack, Senegal, 16th May, 2013. Source: author's field work photos.

6.8.3: Community and Responding to Interstate Political Difficulties

The fisheries sector thrives on a network of cross-border relations. Daily, traders share several phone calls across the border. “Every day I talk to my friends and colleagues in The Gambia several times over the cell phone.”⁴⁹⁹ Through cell phone communication, fish traders keep each other informed about the status of local fish supplies across both sides of the border. This enables them to rapidly respond to demands for fish supplies, from either side of the border. For instance, as soon as Ndoa learnt about fish scarcity

⁴⁹⁹Interview with Laity Ndoa, Kaolack, Senegal, 16th May, 2013

in The Gambia, he loaded his truck with supplies and asked his son to take it to his partner in The Gambia. “My Gambian partner sells the fish when it arrives there. I reimburse his incurred expenses, he takes his *mandaar* (commission) and then he sends the rest of the money to me.”⁵⁰⁰ If fish was plenty in The Gambia, Ndoa’s contact sends fish to him in Kaolack and the same reimbursement procedure is followed between the two. “Hey, we know each other very well. We have each other’s phone numbers. Through telephone, we update each other on what is happening in the market, what stock is available, and so on. It is a collaboration.”⁵⁰¹

Fishing communities communicate daily and this habit cements their cross-border ties. The cross-border contacts also help them to develop problem-solving structures that can help them tackle the challenges of the border and other issues that affect them. They also established a consultative forum called the *Association Cooperation Senegalo-Gambie*, which gives each side better access to the other’s fishery resources. This forum first met at The Gambian coastal fishing settlement of Tanji. Since then, it has strengthened the ground for future collaborations.⁵⁰²

The cross-border partnership among Gambian and Senegalese fish traders and fishing communities is considered as one of the best practices in West African fisheries communities. Other communities from other countries visit them to study how they work and learn from their practices. The cooperation between Gambian and Senegalese fish traders and fishing communities has also been praised in both countries as an ideal cross-border partnership, which should be replicated in interstate relations and in other parts of West Africa. This is why the Malian fish traders embarked on a study tour, to study the working of this cross-border partnership.

This cooperation should be extended to other sectors between the two countries given that the populations share the same mother and father. Many more things could be facilitated through such cooperation. Even Ivory Coast and Burkina are trying to copy

⁵⁰⁰ Interview with Laity Ndoa, Kaolack, Senegal, 16th May, 2013.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*

us. (His cell phone rang and he picked up the call). This phone call is about a fish truck that just arrived from Casamance. They are big fish.- *sharka*. We will send them further to Dakar. Some of our fish are for export. We use to have some Gambian partners who come here, get fish and then put them on board flights in Dakar for export.⁵⁰³

Traders in the fisheries sector view border closures between The Gambia and Senegal as “a no win for both sides.”⁵⁰⁴ They also view transporters’ militant stance on the border as a case of transferred aggression. They argue that when transporters and the state disagree over the border, and close it, they hurt the majority, who did not play any role in the events that occasioned the border closure.

I recalled a border closure when they refused Senegalese transport from entering Gambian territory. It paralysed our work on both sides of the border. It was tough on both countries. We are people of the same parents. We have had a long history of interaction, so stopping it suddenly becomes costly for both countries. We could not do much. We waited for them to have a dialogue to resolve it. We prayed for an amicable resolution because that is best for the two populations. The populations voted for the Presidents, so we listened to them expecting that they will pursue our desire on the border.⁵⁰⁵

Aware of the inherent tensions in The Gambia-Senegal relations, cross-border fisheries actors see themselves as a unified group who must remain together, irrespective of bad interstate politics. They developed strong institutional frameworks that used both cultural and economic principles to advance their trade, community and interests, in ways that are beyond the reach of the state and interstate politics in Senegambia. Thus, cross-border fish traders creatively navigate the border, they depend on various resources to promote their interests and avoid being entangled in interstate political disputes.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

6.9: Conclusion

This chapter explored how cross-border traders dealing in various goods use creativity, contingency and various resources at their disposal, to navigate the complex context of the border, to promote their cross-border economic interests. The chapter also highlighted how inter-state conflicts can have productive outcomes and yield new economic opportunities for traders on both sides of the border. Irrespective of the schemes that politicians can play on the border to foster the logics of their respective states, the borderland residents will always make the border work for them. As state agents perform statehood, they also manifest their belonging to the sociocultural landscape of the borderland. This process has inherent tensions, but it is part of the authentic reproduction of everyday experiences of the border. This leads us to chapter 7, where I explore how cross-border religious networks work with the border, state authorities and among themselves, to navigate the complex context of the border.

CHAPTER 7

SENEGAMBIA'S TALIBEE NETWORKS, THE STATE AND CROSS-BORDER EXCHANGE

“Relations are a merchandise of God.”
(A saying among Senegambian religious communities).

7.0: Faith, Language, Community and the Border

The cross-border religious networks that straddle The Gambia-Senegal border belong to different Muslim groups. The Mouride brotherhood is the most extensively studied among these groups. It has a transnational following and its members are prominent politicians and powerful state actors in Senegal. They also have a great deal of power in transportation, manufacturing and retail trade. There are Mourides in The Gambia, but majority of the country's population follow the Tijanniya or the Quadirriya brotherhoods.⁵⁰⁶ These two religious groups manifest forms of attachment and practices that are distinct from those of the Mourides. However, Mourides, Tijannis and the Quadirrs all belong to the same World community of Muslims, the *ummah*.⁵⁰⁷ This chapter studies how cross-border religious networks that mainly follow the Tijanniya sect practice their ideas of community that transcend The Gambia-Senegal border. It also looks at how they use the different resources at their disposal to navigate conflict and to sustain cross-border community values.

⁵⁰⁶ For more on the Mourides and other religious groups see Donal B Cruise O'Brien, "Wails and whispers: the people's voice in West African Muslim Politics," in Patrick Chabal, ed., *Political Domination in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 71- 83.

⁵⁰⁷ Lamin Sanneh, *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Senegambian religious and social ideas about community work hand in hand. Consequently, people profess multiple identities and affiliations, which create a network of connections and ties that transcend particular spectrums of identity. This is why I consider ethnicity as a narrow description for discussing the identities of Gambians and Senegalese. There are various markers of community, which serve as legitimate bases for grouping people into a community. Even if people profess different religious beliefs, they can still enjoy other connections that can validate their sense of sharing some kind of community tie. Due to the fluid nature of Senegambian social relations, if people do not share a culture, they may share a religion, a place of origin, language, or other solid experiences that can shape feelings of community in people. Language accommodation and language shifts are also common in Senegambian societies. Hence, people can nurture flexible multi-ethnic identities. This is why the framework used in this work moves away from ethnicity but concentrates on other more relevant markers of identity in Senegambia (see chapter 1).⁵⁰⁸

Senegambian society has been reproduced from longstanding social contacts, outreach and exchange that happened within different transition-zones. Social entities tend to be interdependent on one another. For example, in Senegambia, a greatness of a ruler is dependent on the greatness of his bard, who is of a lower caste. The eloquence of the oratory skills of the *jali* or *fena*, is dependent on the heroic deeds or exploits of his patron.⁵⁰⁹ The retelling and recounting of social histories generally focus on how different elements of society have been interdependent on each other or on one another. Most stories also show how society works in cooperation and not in antithesis. For example, the upper and the lower caste had always relied on each other, irrespective of their different social status.

⁵⁰⁸ On scholarship on ethnicity in Africa see Alexander Keese, ed. *Ethnicity and the Long-term Perspective: The African Experience* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2010).

⁵⁰⁹ *Jali*- is a Mandinka word for griot or a bard. *Fena* also means bard in Mandinka.

Social protocols around caste are designed to create continuities rather than barriers in social relations.⁵¹⁰

Like social actors, religious actors also employ different socio-religious ideas, metaphors and social idioms of relations, to validate and re-validate local histories about Gambia- Senegal ties. Consequently, the use of language is central to processes that create an enduring sense of relatedness among Senegambians, irrespective of the limits to the use of language. For example, Mam Abodul Aziz Sy's fabric metaphor signifies that The Gambia and Senegal are inseparable (see chapter 1). The right side of the fabric is nonexistent, if there is no back or wrong side. Right and wrong are used here, as a descriptive essence for identifying different parts of the textile. They do not articulate moral principles about the good or the profane. They reinforce a sense of solidity in social relations. But when used in a provocative sense, the textile metaphor is symbolic of the colonial partition of Senegambia; the ruining of a once unified polity and the disintegration of a society to different segments. Sensibilities about the fractious colonial history question the resilience of social relations amid the significant institutional and language (official) barriers between the two countries. However, the dogged insistence on the validity of cross-border relations re-invent the colonial history and thus, minimises the ability of that political experience to reduce the strength of the social one.⁵¹¹

Oral histories are used to recount different stories about social and religious experiences of the past. This process helps to solidify social relations and contribute to a sense that cross-border relations are cohesive. For example, Cheikh Mahe Niass used stories of past encounters between Senegal's Niassens and Gambians to conclude that the relationship between the two is a "natural link- a relationship woven by God."⁵¹² When Niass' grandfather, Mam El Haj Bai Niass, a well-loved man of God, lived in exile in The Gambia, Gambians voluntarily adopted them as their beloved

⁵¹⁰ See Thomas A. Hale, *Griots and Griottes: Masters of Words and Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

⁵¹¹ Interview with Cheikh Mahe Niass, Kaolack, 16th May, 2013.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*

spiritual guide and leader. They reportedly consulted him on both spiritual and non-spiritual matters. Garba Jahumpa and Dawda Jack, two popular anti-colonial Gambian leaders, became *talibe*s of Mam El Haj Bai Niass. This connection has endured between the Niassens and Gambians, and is celebrated even today, through retelling, prayers and other kinds of spiritual outreach.

Religious authorities in both The Gambia and Senegal have a tendency to remember the two populations in their prayers. There are numerous audio recordings of religious authorities offering prayers to the populations of both countries. In fact, during my fieldwork, I witnessed Mam Ansou Niang of Sirmang, praying for both countries, during the official opening of the Sirmang *gamoo*. Additionally, Mam Ansou implored the Senegalese officials who attended the event, to always keep The Gambia in mind. Using traditional references of solidarity and cooperative relations, he entrusted politicians to pay heed to each other and jealously protect the ties and good will that have historically existed between populations of the two countries. Senegambian religious leaders like Mam Ansou use deliberate measures to socialise people to value the bonds between Gambians and Senegalese.

Curtin observed that post-colonial West African Muslim societies have modes of behaviour that derive from pre-colonial and colonial Islamic ancient socialisation processes. Their socialised patterns of behaviour maintain and sustain a “tradition of friendships” and “alliances” which have been integral to the theology and the spreading of Islam, from the Arabian Peninsula to the Maghreb, and to West Africa.⁵¹³

In Senegambia, this tradition of friendships and alliances are shaped by *wullere*, a Wollof word that means remembering or paying heed to and reliving past ethical relations between or among individuals (see chapter 2). *Wullere* constitute an important part of religious communication where, retelling becomes an important spiritual and social tool for spreading faith,

⁵¹³ Philip D Curtin. *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa, Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975).

enhancing human relations and deepening ties with God. This chapter demonstrates how the retelling of the social experiences and the life histories of selected Islamic spiritual leaders in Senegambia help to reinforce cross-border and interstate relations. These processes are part of the broad social practice that uses language-metaphors, social idioms of relations and other oral descriptions to entrench fellow-feelings between Gambians and Senegalese.

Wullere is an intergenerational relation that derives from past alliances and relations of assistance or mutual aid established during social contacts like religiously motivated displacement (searching for God), educational pursuits or even trading encounters among different individuals in Senegambia (see chapter 2). Such intergenerational social capital shapes followership ties between maraboutic families and religious communities. Therefore, religious attachments weave a network of ties between the various clerical establishments, which consist of Mouride, Tijanniya, Quadirriya and other maraboutic families. These senior level attachments become an interrelated network of attachments among their followers.⁵¹⁴ Thus, Senegambian religious networks are embedded in *long duree* intergenerational family and followership ties (see chapter 2). This partly explains why social communication among the different religious sects is characterised by the use of affective terms like *dome-ndeye*, *mbokh* and *wullere*. For example, the head of the Mourides, or Tijannis or Quadirrs would use these words to refer to the leader of one of the other groups. Similarly, they expect their followers to interact with the followers of the other groups with decorum, respect and affinity.

The code of conduct for inter-sect interactions partly explains why in both The Gambia and Senegal, the practices of *talibee* networks transcend the border and promote social and political equilibrium in society.⁵¹⁵ They

⁵¹⁴ We use the term clerical establishments for the Islamic brotherhoods here both as a matter of preference and because this term better communicates the deep-roots and legitimacy these religious institutions enjoy in society.

⁵¹⁵ *Talibee* is the name given to a member of any of the Islamic brotherhoods in Senegambia. It is also used to mean a student studying the Quran.

use language and social idioms of relations to foster community, entrench socio-religious and cultural “theories” about Senegambian social bonds and use intergenerational solidarity to sustain cross-border and interstate relations (see chapter 1). Therefore, their practices can transform conflict in The Gambia-Senegal relations and can foster cross religious, inter-sect and cross-border harmony. Consequently, the Tijannis like other West African Islamic sects accommodate values for creating “wealth in people.”⁵¹⁶ Their religious practices embody “unifying codes” that aim to be beyond community, trade, homeland, tribe and tongue, beyond confrontation and crisis, confinement, jihad and politics.⁵¹⁷

We concentrate on the religious practices of the Tijannis mainly because they constitute a sect that is part of Islamic pacifist groups who continue a longstanding clerical vocation promoted by religious masters who aim to distance themselves from the state.⁵¹⁸ As a faith community that aims to be less embedded within the state, they provide an interesting case for identifying the complex nuances of state-society relations in Senegambia. They also provide an interesting example of how religious communities have effectively used the border to pursue their religious, political and economic concerns.

The chapter aims to answer the question: what are some of the religious ideas, habits and practices that sustain The Gambia-Senegal relations? It also seeks to answer how do religious communities navigate the border and the nuances of state-society relations in Senegambia? These questions are related to the concerns of the previous chapters.

The first part of the chapter is the introduction. This is followed by an exploration of the religious tendency to draw lines of continuities across different spatial and social entities. This is followed by a discussion of the intersection between religion, the state and community. The next section

⁵¹⁶ See Sara Berry, *No condition is permanent: the social dynamics of agrarian change in sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

⁵¹⁷ Sanneh, *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist...*2016.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*

provides the life history of El Haj Taib Diallo, a Senegambian spiritual leader, and this serves as an example of how religious leaders' lifestyle, educational, worship and other practices are embedded in cross-border contexts. This is followed by an exploration of religious clerics' views on smuggling and interstate conflicts. It also looks at how transporters share clerics' views on interstate issues. This is followed by an example of how religious networks can mobilise to de-escalate conflict in interstate relations. This is followed by the conclusion of the chapter.

7.1: Senegambia's Islamic Spiritual Leaders and De-bordering Space: a Shared Heritage

In colonial and postcolonial Senegambia, all the major Islamic religious leaders have lived their lives on both sides of the border. For example, Sheikh Mass Kah, one of Senegambia's venerated spiritual leaders was originally Senegalese but lived and founded settlements in The Gambia.⁵¹⁹ Mam Abdoulaye Niass, father to Bai Ibrahima Niass of Kaolack lived in exile (from the French) in The Gambia for eleven years.⁵²⁰ A more recent example is Sheikh Mam Ansou Niang of Sirmang, Senegal, who lived in The Gambia for many years as the student of the grand marabout Siffoe Kanteh of Siffoe, Kombo South.⁵²¹ The cross-border life experiences of these venerated spiritual leaders weave intergenerational cross-border social bonds. Their habits of displacement models the *hijra* of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and early Muslims' flight and exile from persecution.⁵²² Their travels were also part of the educational and spiritual habits of Islamic scholars and the faithful. They "gathered" knowledge through learning from different authorities across different spaces. Islam therefore cultivated spatial norms that established lines of continuities and connections among different spatial and social entities.

⁵¹⁹Interview with Saihou Ba, grandson of Mass Kah, 2012.

⁵²⁰Interview with son Cheikh Mahe Niass, Kaolack, Senegal, May, 2013.

⁵²¹I held several discussions with Alhagi S. Sarr, a follower of Mam Ansu Niang, during my fieldwork in 2013.

⁵²² *Hijra*- Islamic term for the migration of Prophet Mohammad (SAW) and his followers from Mecca to Medina.

There are various practices that spiritual leaders used to connect different spatial and social entities. From the seventh century to contemporary times, it has been a common practice for Islamic spiritual leaders to form new settlements from which to practice their faith (see chapter 2). Sanneh's description of the life style of the pacifist clerics of West Africa is relevant here:

Without a homeland to claim or to defend, pacifist clerics adopted pastoral itinerancy as a way of life: the dispersion trail provided a defense against danger and an instrument of expansion. Spread out over a wide acre, the pacifist trail embraced towns, villages, and hamlets. As a result, clusters of settlements emerged as a network of teaching centers and contacts.⁵²³

The case study on El Haj Taib's life experience in Senegambia is another good example of how accomplished religious scholars cultivated the habit of establishing new faith communities away from the land of their birth. This aspect of clerical dispersion connects different spatial and social worlds—towns, villages and hamlets, urban and rural centers. The practice is also a conflict avoidance strategy. Dispersion and the creation of new settlements helped newly accomplished clerics to avoid interference with pre-existing cleric-*talibee* loyalties in their community of origin. An accomplished cleric of notable erudition and elevated spiritual standing generally attracts new followers, who visit him to pay homage and to seek spiritual guidance. If he stays in his community of origin, he can draw *talibe*s of other clerics in the community to him and thus cause rivalry and divisions in the community. To avoid rivalries and divisions, he settles in a new community, set up his own educational facility to teach the Quran to other people, he preaches people and serves as an Imam in his community. However, he maintains ties with other spiritual leaders including those in his community of origin. Sanneh validates that dispersion has always been integral to the core values of Islam. He noted that:

Pacifist groups spread in many parts of West Africa where their reputation won them disciples and supporters. These groups stayed within the Muslim community, rather than becoming sectarian splinter groups. They added to the experience of

⁵²³ Sanneh, *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist...*2016, 8.

diversity, not only of cultural practices but also of the spiritual values of behaviour and conduct.⁵²⁴

Sanneh further noted that:

The clerics formed a distinct religious community by specialization in educational, religious, and legal scholarship. With the support of the wider religious network of clerical settlements, this scholarship enabled them to appropriate and promote Islam's heritage of peaceful transmission, work that came to define the clerical identity.⁵²⁵

New settlement creation was therefore a means of developing new relations while strengthening old ties and avoiding conflict. It is also an opportunity to spread one's reputation as a godly person, which helps to cultivate pools of followers (see chapter 2).

Additionally, the family building practices of Senegambian spiritual leaders aim to widen social ties, peace and solidarity in society. For instance, a good number of major Senegambian religious leaders have Tukulour/Fulani origins as a result of both or one of their parents. However, they develop inter-ethnic family ties by marrying with other people outside their ethnic group. Hence, some of them and their descendants have mixed multi-ethnic and inter-caste backgrounds.⁵²⁶ Their mixed lineages and their levels of spiritual standing help them to cultivate pools of followers that transcend ethnic, caste and state borders. They become legitimate, populist spiritual guides, who favour community beyond the political barriers of the state.

Arguably, from independence to date, Senegambian Islam has been more inclusive, than exclusive, more binding than divisive and more engaging than disengaging. However, controversial religious figures like Ndigal have emerged in Senegambia and caused controversies among Muslims in both The Gambia and Senegal. He founded a community at the border between the two countries and prescribed new Islamic codes for his

⁵²⁴ *Ibid*, xii.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid*, 1.

⁵²⁶ See Jacob K. Olupona, *African Religions: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

followers. But Ndigal and his self-made doctrines of faith eventually disappeared from public attention.⁵²⁷

The Gambia has also experienced some disagreements between the Muslims and the Ahmadiyya Muslim sect over issues relating to religious ritual in the country. But these disagreements are always swiftly settled and the different communities continue to co-exist in their communities. The presence of the Ahmadiyya or the emergence of numerous Pentecostal churches in the country has not also undermined inter-religious tolerance in The Gambia.⁵²⁸ Senegal also has high levels of inter-religious and intersects tolerance like The Gambia. But The Gambia-Senegal experience is distinct from that of Nigeria, where religious pluralism is under threat.⁵²⁹

Senegambia's religious experiences contradict how most Western societies misunderstand Islam and equate the religion with jihad and violence. Robinson argues that: "Europeans and North Americans have had difficulty understanding Islam, even greater difficulty understanding Muslim societies and individual Muslims, and even more comprehending Muslim societies in Africa and in African history."⁵³⁰ For him, the miscomprehension of Islam in the West is not about a "clash of civilization." The hostility and stereotype that Islam is slammed with, endures from the crusades.⁵³¹ Esposito and Mogahed also note that the average person from the West sees Islam as a divisive religion.⁵³² These misconceptions of Islam are far from the authentic teachings and values the religion seeks to inculcate in its followers. As such, this chapter on the habits, attitudes and spiritual practices of Senegambian religious networks is relevant to The Gambia-

⁵²⁷ Ndigal was a marabout in the Kaur area along The Gambia and Senegal borders who started a new Islamic religious order but which was later rejected by the community.

⁵²⁸ On the resurgence of Pentecostal Churches in Africa see Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁵²⁹ For more on religious interactions in Nigeria see Akintunde E. Akinade, ed. *Fractured Spectrum: Perspectives on Christian – Muslim Encounters in Nigeria* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012).

⁵³⁰ David Robinson, *Muslim Societies In African History, New approaches to African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), xv.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.* He makes reference to Huntington's 1997 work on the "clash of civilization."

⁵³² John L Esposito, and Dalia Mogahed. *Who speaks for Islam? What a billion Muslims really Think* (New York: Gallup Press, 2007).

Senegal relation and to the rectification of the misconceptions some people in the West have about Islam.

We acknowledge that both Muslims and non-Muslims have contributed to sustaining different misunderstandings of Islam. Some people have used Islam to pursue various political and ideological goals, like others have done to other faiths. The manipulative use of religion has been mentioned in the Islamic holy book, the Qu'ran, which forewarned that some people "traffic" with religion and the words of God.⁵³³ This misuse of religion has been true of all the major religions of the world and even for other faiths with lesser numbers of global followers. Notwithstanding, Lamin Sanneh's book *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam*, offers a rich, advanced scholarly exploration of how Islam spread and took hold in West Africa without jihad and what the peaceful assimilation of Islam in the region "means for ongoing religious and social change" in Senegambia and in West Africa as a whole.⁵³⁴ The next section therefore explores the intersections between religion, community and the state in Senegambia.

7.2: Religion, Community and the State

In The Gambia, Senegal and in other African countries, people continue to believe in religion. This reality defies predictions that as "democratic culture" and "modernity" gain foothold in society, religion would be less important to people.⁵³⁵ The way Africans continue to embed themselves in different faith traditions also contrasts with how religion and religiosity is rapidly declining in the West. In the African experience, both elites and populations have strong religious attachments, which includes believe in the occult. Consequently, religious beliefs like culture influence African political behaviour. However, the influence religion has on politics is different from one African country to another. For example, religious brotherhoods wield a significant political clout in Senegal. But they do not do so in The Gambia,

⁵³³ The Holy Quran

⁵³⁴ Sanneh, *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist...*2016, 1.

⁵³⁵ Patrick Chabal and Jean Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works, Disorder as Political Instrument* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999).

Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone, Mali and Ivory Coast.⁵³⁶ Religion has no outcome on the electoral process in these countries. Generally, the clerical establishments in these countries follow “a centuries-long tradition of piety and enterprise as civil activities. Muslim traders and visitors operated independently within West African societies, though they had recourse to officials of the state in Mali in case of fraudulent or unjust treatment.”⁵³⁷ In observing principles of clerical neutrality, most religious establishments in Senegambia aim to set themselves apart from the rulers and desire to ensure “fidelity to religious teachings over cooption by rulers.”⁵³⁸ But there are nuances to this ambition as most of these religious centers have *talibe*s who work for the state.

Historically, Islamic clerics’ attempt to separate themselves from the state was a nuanced process. For example, in the kingdom of Mali and in other West African polities, Islamic scholars were in charge of state records; they were also involved in inter-state diplomat exchanges inside the continent and beyond.⁵³⁹

Muslim clerics who rendered religious services to Islamized chiefs became integrated into the socio-political system of the state by playing roles similar to those of traditional priests. Like Traditional priests, Muslim clerics were politically neutral and could therefore act as peacemakers.⁵⁴⁰

This nuanced relationship between clerics and the state system is part of the co-extension between society and the state. If state authorities are also religious followers, then the state and religion may not appear as discrete entities. If religion is an interrelated dimension of the social process, and clerical establishments are valorised through their practices and their

⁵³⁷ Sanneh, *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist...* 2016, 6.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid*, 3. Religious leaders like Mam Ansou Niang shun politics and seek to set themselves apart from political authority. However, some of his *talibe*s are state employees and this provides nuances to the idea of separation from the state. Normally, the state is also represented during religious events organized in Sirmang. But everybody considers him as a man who is above politics.

⁵³⁹ John O. Hunwick, *West Africa, Islam and the Arab World: Studies in Honor of Basil Davidson* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2006); Nehemia Levtzion, and Randall L. Pouwels, *History of Islam in Africa* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000).

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 3

followership, then the fluidity in clerical neutrality is justified by the multidimensional nature of social relations. Berry's assertion (below) is instructive for understanding cleric-state relations in Senegambia.

In many African societies, a person's status and influence depend directly on his or her ability to mobilize a following. If access to resources depends on the influence one brings to bear in negotiations over property rights, production, or exchange, and influence is enhanced by having followers, then it is not necessarily advantageous to exclude people from social networks, even if these networks also serve as channels of access to resources or frameworks for organizing production and accumulation.⁵⁴¹

The focus of the relationship between clerical establishments and their followers are first about faith and spirituality. However, Berry's assertion helps us identify the linkages between religion, community and the state in Senegambia. Religious networks aim to preserve social life.⁵⁴² They embody unifying codes. In particular, Sanneh notes that West African pacifist groups have policies of religious and inter-ethnic accommodation and therefore they maintain social equilibrium and serve as sites for peace and co-existence.⁵⁴³

Fred-Mensah studied conflict management among the Buem located in the Ghana–Togo borders and found that traditional structures were conflict mediators in the community. Since religion is deep-rooted in Senegambia, it is considered as part of such traditional structures. Hence, it borrows culture-situated metaphors and idioms of relations like the fabric metaphor to describe The Gambia-Senegal relations (see chapter 1).⁵⁴⁴ Additionally, West African trading networks have used their membership in religious

⁵⁴¹ Sara Berry, *No condition is permanent: the social dynamics of agrarian change in sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 15.

⁵⁴² See Horton's observation about how religion fosters peace quoted by Davidson in Basil Davidson, "A science of Social Control," in *African Social Studies*, ed. P.C.W. Gutkind, and P. Waterman (London, Ibadan, Nairobi, Lusaka: Heinemann Educational Books, 1977).

⁵⁴³ Sanneh, *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist...2016*.

⁵⁴⁴ B. K. Fred-Mensah, "Bases of Traditional Conflict Management Among the Buems of the Ghana- Togo Border, in *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts, African Conflict Medicine*, ed. W.I., Zartman (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 2000).

groups to strengthen systems of “good-faith economy and protect trading relations and social bonds.”⁵⁴⁵

Talibee networks have used The Gambia-Senegal border to enhance interpersonal and intercommunity bonds, structure mobility, trade and social outreach beyond the reach of the state. In the next section, we revisit how these networks work and the influence they have on the border, on society and on the state and how they solidify The Gambia-Senegal ties.

7.3: *Talibee* Networks and Religious Events: Solidifying Cross-Border Bonds

Senegambia’s *talibee* networks facilitate significant cross-border contacts through organised religious caravans (fleets of cars, buses and vans), which take people to *ziarres*, *gamoos* and other public religious ceremonies. These *talibee* or religious networks have diverse centres of affiliation. For example, Tivoavone (in Senegal) is the spiritual headquarters of some Tijannis, while Touba, is that of all Mourides.⁵⁴⁶

Talibeos are the religious audience of the man of God. They visit clerical establishments to express their belonging to a particular religious “house” or community. They pay homage to the spiritual leader or holy man of that house. The “house” or “community” symbolises a spiritual and social sanctuary and shapes the community’s social and religious agenda. *Talibee* is about a conduct, an aspiration towards the pristine. It also means a seeker. The cleric who embarks on religious displacement is also a *talibee* of sorts (see chapters 1 & 2). But when he functions as head of a clerical establishment or the marabout or *khalifa*, he is a spiritual leader.

The *Khalifa* General is the supreme leader of each clerical establishment. He heads the house and provides spiritual support to the *talibeos* of the house. He also conducts prosperity prayers for them. When a follower has any infractions with state authorities, the *Khalifa* General may

⁵⁴⁵ Harry Englund, *From War to Peace on the Mozambique-Malawi Borderland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002).

⁵⁴⁶ *Ziarres* or *ziyarreh* is the local name given to religious-“pilgrimages” held at various places in Senegambia at various times of the year.

intervene on his or her behalf, to get relief from state authorities. In this sense, he plays a role that is similar to the roles chief Gueye of Keur Ayib plays in chapter 6, as he lobbies state border agents to make certain concessions for members of his community (see chapter 6).

Clerical establishments seek to redeem the individual, to make him/her a better person. Their worship practices and rituals promote religious codes of conduct. They provide directives to *talibees*, who consider them as their affective parent. The marabout-*talibee* relations are represented as a relationship in which the *talibee* breastfeeds from the marabout or the *khalifa*.⁵⁴⁷ The use of the maternal metaphor communicates intimacy between the two people. It is fundamental to Islamic core values for keeping and maintaining family and social ties. It also connects to the concept of *ummah*, which considers all Muslims of the world as members of a global community. Consequently, clerical establishments foster social relations that are beyond social and physical barriers.⁵⁴⁸

Quinn observed that in Senegambia religious fellowship or fellow-feeling displaces tribal or ethnic or political allegiances.⁵⁴⁹ In 18th and 19th century Senegambia, people mobilised around their Islamic faith to protest against the pillaging of traditional ruling aristocracies.⁵⁵⁰ This was made easy by the fact that Islam encourages people to cultivate relations within and outside the family. Visits to relatives, attending religious events and social rituals such as naming ceremonies, weddings, funerals, coming of age ceremonies and so on, are fundamental to Islamic practices as they maintain social attachments. Islamic values for relatedness complement social values for maintaining ties. The Mandinka proverb which says, “empathy is rooted in social acquaintance,” re-echoes values for social outreach. This resonates with the Wolof proverb, which says that, “relations

⁵⁴⁷ Interview with El Haj Bun Diahm, Keur Sainey Gueye, Senegal, 22nd January, 2013.

⁵⁴⁸ *Umma*- Islam is based on a sense of a global community which is known as the umma.

⁵⁴⁹ Charlotte A. Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia* (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1972).

⁵⁵⁰ Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 305.

are the work of the feet.” Aptly, the mobility metaphor used in this proverb also values interfamilial social contacts, which include contacts between religious leaders and their followers. Thus, there are various religious and social events that help Senegambians to maintain various social ties and where applicable, religious attachments, in society.

Gamoo and the *ziarres* are two popular religious rituals that strengthen social ties and religious attachments. These events provide opportunities for physical and face-to-face contacts between *talibe*s, marabouts and their household.⁵⁵¹ In Senegambia, *gamoo* is *Maulud Al-Nabi*, the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), which is usually held in all community mosques and at maraboutic centers.⁵⁵² In both The Gambia and Senegal, *gamoo* is recognised as an official national holiday. The evening and nightlong event is marked by public recitations of the holy Quran and lectures on Islam, and the life of the Prophet (SAW). Clerical establishments use the opportunity to also revisit the religiosity and devotional practices of their founding elder or elders. It is expected to renew people’s faith and morality.

Ziarres are also popular for both their devotional and family reunion aspects. *Ziarre* means paying homage and it is usually held at clerical establishments or maraboutic centres. It is rooted in an Islamic-Arabic term *zihada*, which means adding, or complementing.⁵⁵³ In Wollof, it means “*doleku*.”⁵⁵⁴ It is marked by public recitations of the holy Quran. Religious scholars also take turns to preach attendees on different religious issues. Unlike *gamoo*, which is an evening and nightlong event, *ziarres* last for a couple of days.

Many people in Senegambia look forward to *ziarres*. It is an occasion for *nabangteh ak warante*—preaching and advising one another.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵¹ Interview with El Haj Bun Diaham, Keur Sainey Gueye, Senegal, 22nd January, 2013.

⁵⁵² *Malud Al-Nabi* -An Islamic and Arabic term, which means the birth of the Prophet Mohammad (SAW).

⁵⁵³ An Islamic and Arabic term which means to complement.

⁵⁵⁴ *Doleku*- to complement.

⁵⁵⁵ *Nabangteh ak warrant*- preaching and advising one another.

It reunites families and friends. Attendees reconnect with childhood friends, relatives and other people they may have missed from the previous year or so. It is common for people who live outside their native communities, or in Europe, or in other parts of the world, to return to their communities to participate in *ziarre* events. The event also serves as an opportunity to discuss community projects or issues.⁵⁵⁶ Consequently, *ziarres* and *gamoos* help build community, renew old ties and establish new ones. These religious events and the religious and social philosophy of *talibee* networks solidify inter-personal, intercommunity and cross-border social bonds in Senegambia.

The next section explores how the life history and the spiritual journey of El Haj Taib Diallo, who hailed from Lamin, Nuimi, The Gambia and Keur Sainey Gueye, Senegal, embodied forms of cross-border outreach and connections that solidified The Gambia-Senegal social relations. His life history is also a good example of how religious ideas, habits and attitudes transcend The Gambia-Senegal border. It also shows how religious practices sustain Senegambian kinship discourses and can transform The Gambia-Senegal political disputes over the border.

7.4: El Haj Taib Diallo- His Life, Teaching and Status as a Holy Man of Senegambia

“El Haj Taib Diallo was Senegambia.” El Haj Bun Diaham, the clerical bard/griot of the Diallo clerical establishment in Keur Sainey Gueye, stated in an interview with me. El Haj Taib Diallo was a grand marabout. He was a follower of the *Tarikh* Cheikh Ahmad Tijan or the Tijanniya.⁵⁵⁷ He was born in Bambugarr, a neighbouring village to Sokone, Senegal. His father, El Haj Modou Jallow, and his grandfather, Sheikh Ebrima Jallow, were both from

⁵⁵⁶ Interview with El Haj Bun Diaham, Keur Sainey Gueye, Senegal, 22nd January, 2013.

⁵⁵⁷ Interview was conducted in Keur Sainey Gueye, Senegal on January 22nd, 2013, in a place El Haj Bun Diaham named Darou Salaam, in the compound of El Haj Muhammadou Taib, a descendant of El Haj Taib Diallo. *Tarikh* refers to an Islamic sect.

Njapto, a village in The Gambia.⁵⁵⁸ His mother, Ramatoulie Jallow, was born in Alberdar (Albreda or Juffure) in The Gambia. But she lived in Keur Sainey Gueye, Senegal, with his half-brother Sainey Gueye, a grand marabout and founder of the village, which is located close to the border with The Gambia.⁵⁵⁹ Gueye conducted the first *gamoo* in his settlement in 1941. He died on 4th September, 1976.⁵⁶⁰ In 2013, my visit to Keur Sainey Gueye coincided with the 76th year anniversary of *gamoo* celebrations in the community.⁵⁶¹ A huge influx of people from both The Gambia and Senegal came to attend the event.⁵⁶²

El Haj Bun Diaham narrated that in 1940, El Haj Taib Diallo, returned home from his search for God and for knowledge (see chapter 1 and 2). On the advice of his mother, he settled in his Uncle Sainey Gueye's settlement. This was based on a prediction that his spiritual destiny was tied to that community. He continued learning the Quran on his own. People gave him their children and he taught them the Quran. Majority of these students-*talibee darras*- were from *suuw* -Gerew, Popenguine, Mbour, Sibicoutane, Dakar, and other places in northeast Senegal.⁵⁶³

El Haj Bun Diaham observed that, "Each person's life and place of residence is predestined. God directs the individual to that location by inspiration or putting it in other people's minds who advised him to go there."⁵⁶⁴ When El Haj Taib arrived in Keur Sainey Gueye,

Faith and religion were scarce in the community. Through his teaching, practices and lifestyle, he revived Islam in Keur Sainey Gueye. A relationship of honour and dignity thrived between him and the community. El Haj Taib was more knowledgeable than the people and the elders in the community acknowledged his knowledge. But the people showed him that he was not more honourable than them, *oppa nalen xamxam wai*

⁵⁵⁸The spellings on the last names "Diallo" and "Jallow" reflect the Francophone and Anglophone spellings for the same family name.

⁵⁵⁹ Ker Sainey Gueye in Wolof means the home of Sainey Gueye.

⁵⁶⁰ *Gamoo* is an Islamic feast which celebrates the birth of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It is also called Malud- El- Nabi.

⁵⁶¹ *Dairas*-(singular: *daira*) - Islamic community-based organisations attached to clerical establishments in Senegambia.

⁵⁶² Gamo observed through The Gambia, *The Gambia Weekly*, October 13, 1989, 4.

⁵⁶³ *Talibee darrsu*- is a term used to distinguish between students he taught and the people who he did not necessarily teach but who declared themselves as his students and followers. *Suuw* means the east in Wolof.

⁵⁶⁴ Interview with El Haj Bun Diaham, Keur Sainey Gueye, Senegal, 22nd January, 2013.

*oppu tolin ngorr.*⁵⁶⁵The community followed his teachings and lifestyle with dignity and honour. They appreciated his roles in their community. Life situations were better off in Sokone than in Keur Sainey Gueye. But El Haj Taib remained in his adopted community and faced all the hardships life came with there.⁵⁶⁶

With time, El Haj Taib's devotional practices and his desire to reconnect with his Gambian heritage took him to the community of Lamin, Nuimi, North Bank Region of The Gambia. This was the place where his grandfather Sheikh Ibrahima Jallow was buried, too. Most of his family members had already moved to other areas of Senegambia. Community elders in Lamin guided him to his grandfather's grave in the village and also showed him the family compound, which he revived and used as venue for his worship practices in The Gambia. He started conducting *ziarres* in Lamin and eventually, he spent more and more time there and it became the main venue for his many other acts of worship.⁵⁶⁷

He loved Keur Sainey Gueye but part of the divine plan was he would later spend more time in Lamin. This switching of spaces based on spiritual guidance can be traced to Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'s life. He loved Mecca more. But God decreed for him to go to Medina. "He implored "God You have taken me away from the place I love best, please take me to the place You love most." That was how the Prophet came to Medina. For any good person to fulfill a destiny to greatness, he must face displacement. These journeys away from home are unavoidable for a destiny to greatness.⁵⁶⁸

Overtime, El Haj Taib's popularity as a holy man of faith grew and became widespread in both Senegal and The Gambia. People were impressed with his knowledge, his lifestyle and his asceticism. They sought him out requesting prayers from him. Other people came to him to ask him to give them the Tijanniya "*wirrd*".⁵⁶⁹A new set of *talibees* cultivated themselves around the holy man. They became self-declared followers and students of the *tarikha*.⁵⁷⁰ Majority of these students were Gambians.

⁵⁶⁵ The Wolof term means "he was more knowledge but the people were equally honourable like him."

⁵⁶⁶ Interview with El Haj Bun Diaham, Keur Sainey Gueye, Senegal, 22nd January, 2013.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ziarres*- spiritual renewal events held annually in Senegambia.

⁵⁶⁸ Interview with El Haj Bun Diaham, Keur Sainey Gueye, Senegal, 22nd January, 2013.

⁵⁶⁹ *Wirrd*- is the daily invocations followers of Tijanniya sect do. For someone to start doing it, the person must obtain permission from someone with distinguished spiritual standing.

⁵⁷⁰ *Talibee tarikha*- students of the sect. Students who were taught by him were also called *talibee daara* which means students of the school.

El Haj Taib never called anyone to say “come be my *talibee* and follower.” But people realised the virtues in him and requested the “*wirrd*” from him. *Wirrd* are acts rather than words people follow. Among the elders of past generations, through divine inspiration someone may discover some body of knowledge and practice. As he used it and benefits accrue from it, he passes it to someone who could also practice it and as everyone who become devoted to those acts see the benefits in them, the acts and practices become institutionalised as acts of worship. People who wished to improve their character and their religious practices search for a model they wished to emulate. They come to him, spread their palms before him for prayers. The holy man gave them the rules, dos and don’ts of the *tarikha*. The person feeds on that, feeds his family on that and together they develop a commitment to the source of that. They visit, they bring *adiya* and they keep in close contact with the holy man, elders around him and the family.⁵⁷¹

The devotional practices of these followers are important to understanding the resources Senegambian religious leaders have at their disposal to positively influence interstate political relations. El Haj Bun Diaham noted that there were two kinds of *talibee* devotees; those from rural settings and those from urban areas. The former were based in rural communities. During farming seasons, they lent hands to the farm work of the house and contributed part of their farm produce to the house, as gift to the holy man and his family. The latter group of *talibees* largely comprised traders based in urban settings like Banjul. They provided most of the material goods the house required for hosting community events. They generally have economic wherewithal and through contributions in cash and kind, they helped support the worship practices of the house. El Haj Diaham described the contributions of this set of *talibees* as *jemal Keurgji*, glossing the community, compound or residence of the clerical establishment.⁵⁷²

In contemporary times, during events like *gamoo* and *ziarres*, both set of people contribute towards the event by providing food, drinks, sleeping facilities and other logistics needed for hosting several hundreds of people for such religious gatherings. The fact that people on both sides of the border contribute to and attend such events means that, all sorts of goods,

⁵⁷¹ Interview with El Haj Bun Diaham, Keur Sainey Gueye, Senegal, 22nd January, 2013.

Adiya means gifts to holy men for their prayer and pastoral services.

⁵⁷² *Jemal kergi*- is a Wolof term and it means to enhance a home.

including those with restricted entry, find their way to these events, thanks to “toleration” the state accords to religious communities, too (see chapter 6).

The Diallo clerical establishment, like the many other religious communities, around the border or that host events with cross-border participation, enjoy customs privileges from the state. This privilege enables restricted goods destined for religious events and religious communities to freely pass through the border. This is very similar to the privileges residence of Keur Ayib enjoy from state border agents in the village (see chapter 6). State authorities could also make personal contributions to the hosting of these religious events as *talibe*s, in addition to providing the institutional backing to ensure that these events were held smoothly.

According to El Haj Bun Diahm, the tolerance religious communities enjoy from the state has historical underpinnings. “The elders conducted their religious events from their own resources and people attended them without making little or no contributions. The elders never stretched their palms to anyone. During the events, they lived in the remembrance of God, they celebrated the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and then dispersed.”⁵⁷³ But overtime, some *talibe*s, who attended these events felt they must contribute towards these events and this was how their involvement in the financing of such events started. Since they bring both cash and other goods such as bags of rice, cooking oil, bags of sugar, most of which are controlled goods in Senegal, it was necessary to get permission from state authorities to allow the passage of these goods. Religious communities were granted exemptions for the passage of such goods partly because the elders who were in the forefront organising such religious event shunned political leadership. Their roles did not conflict with that of state authorities. It was also common for state employees to be members of these *talibee* networks.

The relationship spiritual leaders and political figures shared was a mutually reassuring tie.⁵⁷⁴ For example, the elders desired to remain in the

⁵⁷³ Interview with El Haj Bun Diahm, Keur Sainey Gueye, Senegal, 22nd January, 2013.

⁵⁷⁴ For other perspectives on this see Donal B Cruise O’ Brien, *Saints and Politicians* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

religious realm while leaving secular power to the politicians. El Haj Bun noted that the elders had a fervent prayer which was “*yalnanyu bur nyamal be nyu muna jamou Yalna*.”⁵⁷⁵ The desire to separate religious and political leadership was a founding principle of the clerical establishments. The elders believed that “*Bour ku buka bukacmoum nguurram mu hanjn la sa jamm*.”⁵⁷⁶ This understanding of the relationship between the clerical establishments and the state was also structured by a religious-cultural notion that “*Kuu jupp tedah*,” which implies non-interference in secular issues, which did not concern the religious realm.⁵⁷⁷ For example, El Haj Bun stated that irrespective of the extensive social support religious authorities enjoyed in society, they deferred to state authorities on matters of the state.

Every year before the *gamoo* season starts, we make a courtesy call on the border authorities in Karang to formally inform them about the coming events. We also renew our request for their toleration of the people and the goods coming to our events. No matter how difficult times are, these authorities grant our requests. For example, last year 2012 the border was closed but they allowed the people and the goods coming to us to pass. They allowed no cars in but the people were free to come in. They came, did their *ziarres* and then they returned to The Gambia. The government has never given us any difficulties over this. We cannot say that we are Senegalese. We cannot say that we are Gambians. We are between the two countries. We live in both milieus. The *huur* at the other end of the community was completely destroyed and cut-off by the rain last year.⁵⁷⁸ No one could pass there. We reported this to the Senegalese government to help reconstruct it. But God destined that their assistance would be slow in coming. But on my own accord, El Haj Bun Diaham, I went to the *anglais* and informed our well-wishers about it.⁵⁷⁹ From the *anglais* I got about one thousand and two hundred bags of cement as assistance to reconstruct the *huur*. The same *anglais* helped me to bring the cement over to Keur Sainey Gueye. Now people can pass thorough the *huur* without any problem.⁵⁸⁰

The above narrative highlights Senegambian discourses of oneness. However, there are subtle references to the divisions, which occasioned interstate political difficulties between the two countries. For example, a religious community like Keur Sainey Gueye considers the description *si anglais bi*, as a reference to the international boundary. It signifies the

⁵⁷⁵ In Wolof, may the ruler give us peace for us to render well our devotion to God.

⁵⁷⁶ A sovereign denies peace to the one seeking to share his sovereignty/power.

⁵⁷⁷ The person of virtues reaps grandeur

⁵⁷⁸ *Huur* means thoroughfare.

⁵⁷⁹ *Anglais*- is a reference to The Gambia.

⁵⁸⁰ Interview with El Haj Bun Diaham, Keur Sainey Gueye, Senegal, 22nd January, 2013

political separation between the two countries, which implies a separate destiny for the people of the two countries.⁵⁸¹ The reaffirmation that the community lives between two milieus and that they are not of here or there, they belong to both countries, was representative of the fabric metaphor that maraboutic families and their devotees use to communicate the *mbokh* and *dome-ndeye* ties between Gambians and Senegalese (see chapters 1 and 2). The perception that cross-border communities share identities and a sociality signifies that people are more loyal to their social system than to the state. These perceptions in Keur Sainey Gueye can be considered as the general perception in other maraboutic houses in Senegambia, irrespective of the divisions implicit in the term *si anglais bi*.

El Haj Bun's explanation of how a network of close ties was woven around the personality of El Haj Taib Jallow is representative of the general practice through which strong social bonds were developed and maintained between clerical families and other people in Senegambia. *Talibe*s and followers of El Haj Taib Diallo, like *talibe*s and followers of other Senegambian holy men, live in cross-border situations which interconnect them based on the past ties or interactions between the different clerical families they are devoted to (see chapter 2). Given that the "word" *talibee* refers to a fluid concept denoting an attachment a student demonstrates towards his religious teacher and any form of attachments a person has towards the teachings and life styles of a certain holy man, it is symbolic of social networks that bind different individuals into a community. The networks interconnect different communities and enables religious authorities to enjoy influence beyond their devotees. Using a principle like *wullere*, they could claim the loyalty and respect of followers of other Senegambian spiritual leaders. These cross-cutting ties can transform interpersonal, intercommunity and interstate conflicts in Senegambia (see chapter 2).

⁵⁸¹Means "the English side." It is another reference to The Gambia and a subtle reference to Senegambia's colonial history.

The narrative on the life of El Haj Taib Diallo and the clerical establishment he created in Keur Sainey Gueye, Senegal, and Lamin, Nuimi, The Gambia, are a microscopic representation of religious and social ties among Senegambia's religious communities. The lives, teachings and followers of religious leaders intimately crisscross the international boundary. Thus, Keur Sainey Gueye has links to the clerical family in Sokone, Senegal, and Lamin, The Gambia. Through Sokone, it is also linked to the Niass clerical family in Kaolack and other clerical communities like Tivaoune, Senegal.

The Niassens of Kaolack are closely connected to the Nema Nassiru community in The Gambia. Ties between the Niassens and the Mourides are also obvious.⁵⁸² The latter proudly recall Sheikh Bamba Touba Mbackeh's visit to The Gambia and the establishment of active Mouride communities in the country. So, religious and social connections that exist among Senegambia's religious communities consist of a dense network of clerical relations, which include relations with the Quadirrya sect dominated Pakau areas of Casamance. Some communities at this Mandinka holy land trace their origins to founders from Fouta Toro, Senegal, and to other clerical establishments in Senegambia.⁵⁸³

Clerical establishments appropriate the borders as a line of continuity. Proximity to the border was desirable to facilitate easy access by the different constituencies that seek them out. This was why El Haj Taib Diallo's live and spiritual practices revolved around the border. Like him, other Senegambian spiritual leaders utilised the border as a bridge, defying the barrier functions of the border. Hence, it can be argued that they created continuities beyond the limits of legal territory. The legitimacy such populist cross-border religious leaders enjoyed derived from their abilities to forge a network of various ties that enhance their views and goals of community.

⁵⁸² Interview with Cheikh Mahe Niass, Kaolack, May, 2013.

⁵⁸³ This is from sources in my own family who traced our family connections from Fouta Toro to the Pakau.

They work to preserve a sense of community across different social and religious groupings. Their roles contrasts with how transporters obstructed a sense of community, as they dismantled the joint transport network (see chapters 4 and 5). The cross-border practices and attitudes of the different spiritual leaders and their followers in Senegambia, can also be explored in terms of their goals for human welfare and security, as explained in the next section.

7.5: Islamic Discourses: Human Welfare and Security

In Senegambia, politicians, transporters, traders and other members of society routinely consult clerics for different spiritual services, which include officiating marriages, funerals, naming ceremonies, prayers of good fortune and protection from supernatural forces (see chapter 3). This need for spiritual and prayer services shapes the bond between clerics and the rest of society. In particular, transporters and traders commonly seek out clerics for charms, to protect themselves in their frequent long distance travels. Long distance travel is considered a liminal affair in most Senegambian cultures. Therefore, people need protection from supernatural forces, during long distant travels or for other purposes.⁵⁸⁴ The huge social dependence on clerics has psycho-cognitive effects. Individuals generally trust that the clerics they associate themselves with, always have their best interests at heart. They are reliable people. Therefore, devotees can confide their innermost secrets to the clerics. They also show deference towards them.

It is common that transporters, traders, politicians and other people in society self-regulate in their interactions with clerics or with anything associated with them. For example, the Senegalese Transport Association was careful about closing the border during religious events such as *gamoo* and *ziarres*. They made sure that cross-border religious rituals or exchanges

⁵⁸⁴See Geert Mommersteeg, Diane Webb (translator), *In the City of the Marabouts: Islamic Culture in West Africa* (Long Gove, IL: Waveland Press, 2012); Rudolf T. Ware, *The Walking Qu'ran: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (Islamic Civilization and Muslim Networks) 1st Edition (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

were not hindered by their border blockade acts. In fact, some observers noted that anytime there was crisis over The Gambia-Senegal border, the intervention of religious authorities led to a quick re-opening of the border and the resolution of the crisis.⁵⁸⁵ El Haj Bun Diaham also confirmed that state border agents allow their *talibe*s to cross the border in order to attend events at the house during border closures. However, spiritual leaders strategically use their influences to mediate border closures or interstate political tensions. Their first preference in such situations is to let politicians politically resolve any conflicts. But if the tensions persist and bring hardship to more and more people, then they can choose to intervene. This strategy is motivated by the clerical neutrality principle, and a desire to let politicians resolve political problems politically.⁵⁸⁶

When spiritual leaders intervene to resolve border or interstate tensions, they use socio-religious language. It is common for them to invoke and retell stories of cross-border blood and social ties, instances of mutual help, interdependence, companionship and knowledge sharing between Gambians and Senegalese (see chapter 2). They use metaphors like *dome-ndeye*, *mbokh*, or *wullere*, to communicate long-standing blood ties, alliances, friendships and companionships between Gambians and Senegalese.⁵⁸⁷ Thus, a metaphor like the fabric metaphor is a central idea religious communities can use to create and re-create a sense of solidarity among different community groups and politicians in Senegambia.

However, the roles spiritual leaders play sets them apart from politicians. For example, generally, people think that they can depend on the spiritual leader and that he is genuinely interested in the well-being of the individual and society, as a whole. Therefore, spiritual leaders have a social mandate and power to speak to power on behalf of society.

⁵⁸⁵ L.A. Villalon, "Charisma and Ethnicity in Political Context: A Case Study in the Establishment of a Senegalese Religious Clientele," *Journal of International African Institute*. (1993): 80- 101.

⁵⁸⁶ On clerical neutrality, see Sanneh, *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist...2016*.

⁵⁸⁷ Curtin noted that the use of traditions of friendships and alliances have been important in the socialisation processes of West African Muslims, see Curtin, *Economic Change... 1975*.

Their ability to act as advocates for society comes from their understanding of people's needs and social realities.

Marabouts socialise with ordinary people on the streets, in their homes and in religious centres. They are accessible to everyone. They educate people and they guide them. The cleric-society relation is a *longue duree*' abiding love and therefore transcends the opportunistic juggling of relations that can come from politics. In contrast, the political elites, depending on their seniority and their political authority, are considered to be "hiding" from ordinary people. One has to sometimes follow strenuous protocols before seeing them. For example, it would be easier for an ordinary citizen or a complete stranger to have an audience with the *khalifa* general than with the Gambian or Senegalese head of state.

However, comparing the cleric-society relationships to the state authority-society relationships is problematic in the sense that the two relationships come from different sources and have different motivations. For instance, the relationship between citizens and the state or political authority is based on a social contract, which is conferred through electoral processes. This social contract can be changed, modified or altered. It is a terminable relationship.⁵⁸⁸ In contrast, the cleric-*talibee* or cleric-society relationship is not from secular, democratic or political presumptions. It is a voluntary submission to spiritual inclinations and its personal and social aspirations generally relate to God, godliness and faith.⁵⁸⁹ This relationship is deeper as it embodies both the worldly and the hereafter. In contrast, political ties are not generally expected to go beyond the worldly. These differences strengthen the legitimacy clerics have, to advocate for people and for society. In the next section, we use smuggling and transportation as case examples where clerical authorities intervene for social causes and thus, infringe the political mandates of the state.

⁵⁸⁸On the social contract Jean- Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (London: Penguin Books, 1968).

⁵⁸⁹ For more on this see Stephen Ellis, and Gerrie Ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa* (London: Hurst, 2004).

7.6. Smuggling and Transportation: Holding out for the People

Senegambia's religious networks constitute power blocs. They have members who are cross-border traders or transporters. Their activities, like their religious affiliations, are intertwined with The Gambia-Senegal border. Traders generally desire stability in order to enhance their trading interests.⁵⁹⁰ Interstate disputes over the border do not serve their interests at all. The entry restrictions for some goods like rice, cooking oil and so on, do not also serve traders' interests. When traders are held for smuggling goods across the border, they appeal to their clerical guides to intervene with the state for their unconditional release.

Irrespective of the clerical neutrality principle, clerics intervene in such cases to secure the release of their *talibe*s. Cheikh Mahe Niass, the Kaolack-based spiritual leader and scholar, viewed that when the state accuses citizens of smuggling, it is being irresponsible to their needs.⁵⁹¹ The attempt to punish smugglers comes from Senegal's desire to protect its economy. But Niass argues that that process is a complete misunderstanding of what the economy should mean for citizens of a country. He asked: "What is the economy of the country?" It should mean individuals can adequately feed their families, house them and provide for their welfare and wellbeing. This is what a good economy does for ordinary citizens."⁵⁹²

Part of the clerical duty is to help individuals to live secure and fulfilling lives, especially through trading and migration.⁵⁹³ The widespread prevalence of poverty in both The Gambia and Senegal makes this duty even more necessary and thus, clerics have to act "*nger Yallah*" (for the sake of God), to protect accused smugglers from the wrath of the state. Anti-smuggling policies are considered self-interested and not pro-citizens.

⁵⁹⁰Sanneh describes this statement better with a conversation between the West African trader Bouckar Sano and the English trader Richard Jobson. See Sanneh, *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist...2016*

⁵⁹¹Interview with Cheikh Mahe Niass, Kaolack, May, 2013.

⁵⁹²*Ibid.*

⁵⁹³ See Cruise O' Brien, *Saints and Politicians*, 1975.

They bar citizens from seeking alternative sources of livelihood, and therefore, they are politically incorrect. The debate on whether Senegalese anti-smuggling laws are politically correct raises questions like: how can a state that is run by corrupt political leaders accuse citizens of smuggling? What roles should the state play in providing alternative sources of livelihood for its citizens? Niass stated that:

When government accuses citizens of smuggling, we should ask: is government itself doing the right thing? Is government free from corruption and the mismanagement of resources? A smuggler is the person who takes the country's resources and hides them in European banks. Cross-border trade between The Gambia and Senegal is trade among Africans, among people from the same historical circumstances and heritage. Inter-African trade should not be smuggling.⁵⁹⁴

Niass was speaking as both a cleric and a scholar, who speaks different European languages. By comparing the corrupt financial practices of some African states to the survival tactics of cross-border traders and communities, he reveals some inherent failures in governance. He reifies the border and maintains the cleric's role as a voice and advocate for the people.

Niass' view resonates with those of traders and communities that survive from cross-border trader. But even transporters who allegedly execute the Senegalese state's backdoor policies on The Gambia-Senegal border, share clerics' views on these issues (see chapter 4). All of them view that, if Gambian and Senegalese politicians aim to pursue the interests of the two populations, they would avoid the disruptive political disputes they engage in. Using interstate political disputes over football as an example, Niass observed that a football match is not worth the risk of destroying relations between families, populations, or states.⁵⁹⁵ Hence, the two countries need political leaders who understand the sensibilities of the border, cross-border blood ties and other shared bonds, which must be protected and safeguarded for posterity.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹⁴ Interview with Cheikh Mahe Niass, Kaolack, May, 2013.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁶ Interview with Alioune Soum, Administrative Secretary, Senegalese Transport Association, Dakar, Senegal, 16th May, 2016.

At the time of my interviews in 2013, it was observed that, so far, Senegal's president, Macky Sall, seemed to be aware of the sensibilities between the two countries. But under his leadership, The Gambia-Senegal border has been closed more frequently. The border closures that happened under Sall were more than the border closures that happened under presidents Wade, Diouf or Senghor. Transporters were usually behind most of the border closures, however, they blame politicians for their occurrence.⁵⁹⁷

The debate on how different actors contribute to border closures is as complex as The Gambia-Senegal relations. However, the clerics' views of the border resonate with that of the population.⁵⁹⁸ Thus, like traders, *talibee* networks have little or no interest, to see The Gambia-Senegal border closed, even though conflicts on the border can have positive economic outcomes for some individuals. Historically, religious networks play roles in mediating border conflicts. They affect their values for community and their economic opportunities they can exploit for their survival. In the next section, I explore how religious communities mediate border conflicts, instead of fueling them, to give other examples of how clerics serve as champions of cross-border solidarity and peace in Senegambia.

7.7: Clerical Establishments and Transforming Inter-state Conflicts

The way Senegambia's *talibee* networks value community is shown in the roles they played in appeasing victims of the 1989 Senegal-Mauritania border conflict (see chapters 1 & 6). During the conflict, Islamic networks mobilized urgently, to provide humanitarian services to the 600,000 Senegalese and Mauritanian, who were expelled from the *Region de fleuve* and to other victims of the conflict.⁵⁹⁹ This conflict was unlike the Gambia-Senegal border conflicts. Hence, its barbaric nature shocked Senegambians

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁸ For more on this see Donal B Cruise O' Brien, *Symbolic Confrontations: Muslims Imagining the State in Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

⁵⁹⁹ Libya helps out Senegal, Pap Saine, *The Gambia Weekly*, August 18: 1989, 9.

and *talibee* networks. Parties to the conflict ignored longstanding traditions of friendships, educational and other ties between Senegambians and Mauritians. Many Senegambian Islamic scholars have for long or brief periods, studied at Mauritania's prestigious Centres for Islamic Education. Many considered that this reality should have made individuals involved in the conflict to exercise restraint. Additionally, they were shocked that the two countries failed to honour Ramadan, the Islamic holy month, which was traditionally a period when the first Muslims made peace with any existing conflict partners. However, some observers observed that the border war was inspired by racial prejudice, which ignored the Islamic heritage Senegal and Mauritania shared. Religious communities were therefore seriously concerned about the conflict and it became the focus of all religious messages for the two *Eids* of that year.⁶⁰⁰

On Sunday 7th May, 1989, Muslim communities in The Gambia prayed for peace in the Senegal-Mauritania conflict, as part of *Eid-ul Fitr* prayers. Nationwide, the sermons were on peaceful co-existence and good neighbourliness. Banjul held its *Eid* prayers for the first time in the newly built King Fahad Mosque, and there too, the Imam's sermons were on the conflict. It has been a tradition that on every *Eid* prayer, Muslims leaders make a courtesy call on the Gambian President at State House. In the 1989 courtesy visit to state house, Alhaji Abdoulaye Jobe, the *Imam Ritab* of Banjul also reflected on the need for peace and cooperation among Muslims.⁶⁰¹ The other leaders who joined him were, Daud Hanif, the Amir of the Ahmadiyya mission in The Gambia, Alhagi Bora Manjang, elder and representative of the Mandinka community, Alhaji Cherno Jallow, elder of the Fula community and Alhaji Mahmoud Sillah, elder of the Serahuli Community.⁶⁰²

⁶⁰⁰ *Eids*- each year Muslims celebrate two a major religious feast which are known as *Eid' ul fitr* and *Eid' ul adha*. The first one marks the end of Ramadan and the second one follows about three months later during the pilgrimage period to make the sacrifice Prophet Ibrahim wanted sacrifice his son Ismail to God.

⁶⁰¹ *Imam Ritab* – means the supreme Imam of the country.

⁶⁰² Muslims Pray for Peace, *The Gambia Weekly*, May12, 1989.

This interfaith and inter-ethnic meeting was an example of how countries should create lines of continuities, instead of political barriers like the border. The conflict lingered in the minds of religious communities for a considerable time. Three months after *Eid ul Fitr*, religious communities renewed their public reflections on brotherhood and tolerance, major ideals of Islam. The *Eid ul Adha* sermons of the Imam of Serekunda, one of the most populous cities of The Gambia, also focused on peace. He asked worshippers to pray for peace for The Gambia, for neighbouring countries and for people in conflict situations. This was also at a time when civil conflicts started in some sub-regional countries like Sierra Leone. He noted that it was only in peace and goodwill that individuals could seek time to serve God, do their prayers and go about sorting out their daily businesses.

The effort religious leaders and communities made to mediate the Senegal-Mauritania border conflict affected different social groups in The Gambia. It showed in the national mood for the *Eids* for that year. For example, usually, *Eid* was a big joyous celebration in all communities. But that year's *Eids* were celebrated low key and were less social. Families and friends stayed indoors and quietly observed the feast, instead of celebrating on the streets. It inspired one of the newspapers to write an editorial, asking: "Is *Tobaski* Changing?"⁶⁰³

Pre-*Eid* activities like the popular *tobaski* ram sale in The Gambia, was also affected by the conflict. The ram sale brought rams from Mauritania, Mali, Senegal and Guinea Bissau, into The Gambia, for sale. But livestock supplies for that year were low, as the conflict made it difficult to bring livestock from across the borders. This led to high ram prices for that year. Thus, the conflict affected an important religious ritual. Additionally, the usual *wanteer* (sales) that come with religious feasts were largely absent.

Trading was quiet, with few sales reduction events offered in markets. It was observed that the usual crowd of different buyers who assailed Banjul markets to shop for religious feasts was absent. Crowds that

⁶⁰³ "Is Tobaski Changing?" *The Gambia Weekly*, July 13, 1990. Tobaski is the Wolof name for Eid ul Adha.

overflow the footpaths and choke traffic in and around the McCarthy Square, one of the busiest areas of Banjul, were absent, too. Instead, people went about their “business with determination”.⁶⁰⁴ On the day and day after *tobaski*, which were normally days for vibrant street celebrations in communities, the main highways in the country were swept clean of traffic. This led many people to speculate that perhaps a petrol shortage might also be lurking on the way.

Notwithstanding, the different speculations about the somber mood over *tobaski*, underlined to what extent the border conflict affected Muslims in The Gambia and their cross-border co-religionists. Different local communities collaborated to raise donations for victims, provide medical supplies and offered protection to victims in their homes. This large humanitarian effort came from empathy and the sense of community that defined talibee networks. The fact that the Gambia’s president Jawara was also in the forefront of the humanitarian effort point to the ways religious networks could partner with state authorities, to work towards the common good and preserve values for community. The Gambian Muslim communities felt obliged to help victims of both countries since they share with both countries, longstanding religious affiliations. Socio-religious attachments in the Senegambia can therefore be described as proactive and abiding relations that can exist beyond the reach of the state. They ensure the kind of fellow feeling Gambian Muslims demonstrated during the Senegal-Mauritanian crisis.

Values for community shape the reconciliatory roles religious networks aim to play in cross-border and interstate relations. They understand the various social sensibilities that shape interpersonal, intercommunity and interstate relations. They integrate non-religious tools in their religious work, to enhance social and political relations in Senegambia. Hence, the textile metaphor aptly describes how people experience cooperation and conflict in cross-border and interstate relations.

⁶⁰⁴*Ibid.*

The recurrences of interstate conflicts over the border provoke the question, if religious leaders can successfully intervene in The Gambia-Senegal border conflicts then, why do interstate political difficulties recur? The simplest answer to this question is that, conflicts are part of human existence. This truth is reflected in the wisdom of the Mandinka proverb, which says that, the tongue and the teeth are in the same mouth, they clash, but they must learn to live together (see chapter 1). This proverb acknowledges that conflicts are present in society. They are part of everyday experiences. However, the aim of actors in a conflict should be to get the most productive outcome from it, and to avoid violence, which can be detrimental to the whole of society.

The ability of religious networks to intervene and ensure that a conflict does not degenerate into violence, to become harmful to society makes them successful in their enterprise, to promote cordial interstate ties in Senegambia. Religion has caused violent conflicts in places like Nigeria. However, Senegambia shows that religion can play harmonising roles in society. Thus, Islam promotes social integration in Senegambia. The use of memory, language, education, ethics and sacred space maintains cohesion and continuity across time and space.⁶⁰⁵ Religious networks neutralise the barrier functions of the border. They also force political authorities to recognise cross-border social sensibilities. They can do this effectively because religious and social alliances endure better than political ones.

7.8: Conclusion

This chapter on religious networks has established why The Gambia-Senegal interstate political difficulties have not degenerated into violent conflicts despite the recurrence of interstate tensions. It explored how the attitudes, practices and habits of *talibee* networks promote social and political cohesion in Senegambia. It also identified the complex nature of

⁶⁰⁵ Cheikh Anta Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal, 1853- 1913* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007).

state-society relations and how the domain of religion generally serves popular interests, rather than political ones. It also showed how religious networks use the different resources at their disposal to navigate the complex context of the border and how they seek to transform conflict. Thus, the chapter makes further conclusions to arguments that, transport has been more divisive in interstate relations. Trade and religious networks (as domains also fraught with tensions) tend to enhance social solidarity and transform The Gambia-Senegal interstate political difficulties into a more stable relationship.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

The various chapters of this work have identified the complex nature of The Gambia-Senegal border, interstate relations and the relations that happen in the domains of transport, trade and among religious networks. They've also shown how the meaning of culture is fluid and how social thoughts are continuously constructed and reconstructed in society. The selective use of cultural resources works hand in hand with the selective use of other resources that help both state and non-state actors, to navigate the complex context of The Gambia-Senegal border.

The chapters also show how the use of language shapes Senegambian social and political processes. Cultural ideas like *dome-ndeye*, *dome-baaye*, and *wullere* help negotiate the dilemmas of interstate, cross-border and interpersonal relations in Senegambia. These ideas structure how kinship is perceived, used, applied or reconstructed under different contexts. These metaphors and idioms of social relations can transform interstate conflicts in The Gambia-Senegal relations. But their effectiveness is limited by the fact that people can use them when they work for them and they can abandon them, whenever necessary.

There is lot of agency in the way relationships between people and between entities are handled in society. Generally, the decisions of politicians tend to be shaped by their political logics and the logics of the state. These logics include the economic policies the state identified as the best forms of policies for its economic and general survival.

Like the state, transporters also want to secure their economic interests. They want to avoid most of the taxes the state levies on them. This makes them oppose those policies of the state. However, they can also develop alliances with the state, even if they consider it exploitative. Transporter-transporter relations fluctuate between phases of good and bad relations, just like The Gambia-Senegal relations. But they consider themselves victims of the same exploitative state. Similarly, traders compete with each other and yet they willingly share the benefits of trade. Unlike transporters, they do not seek to antagonise the state, even if it fails in its obligations to them and to society. They condone illicit practices from state agents as long as they do not interfere with their trading activities. Traders also use the state to advance their trading interests either by creating businesses that feed from it or that are sustained through protection from the state, like the border currency trade at the Amdallai-Karang border. Religious networks adhere to their community values and lessen the pain of the border by creating continuities across the discontinuity of territory. They nurture strong cross-border identities and through constant outreach between religious houses, their *talibe*s and religious communities, they can transform conflict or avoid conflict in interstate or inter-personal relations. They wish to distance themselves from the political; however, the nature of state-society relations makes that effort a difficult one. The politician is a *talibee*, a follower and therefore engages with the religious leader the same way other members of society engage with him. Hence, there is no tidy separation between the political and religious.

The relationship between Gambian and Senegalese authorities is an interesting one. It swings between different moods. They are allies. They are rivals. They can bend the rules for each other and yet they may also work to undermine each other. However, politicians are adept at using different social resources to foster their political interests and ties in both The Gambia and Senegal. But sometimes, social networks like some economic activities can be beyond the reach of the state.

Consequently, the state has to negotiate with particular actors and entities in order to achieve its ambitions. This implies the authority of the state may not necessarily be supreme within its territory.

It is not only the state that has to negotiate its way through social and political systems to achieve its aims. Non-state actors and non-state entities also have to negotiate with others, to achieve their goals. Religious communities negotiate with state border agents for them to provide them and their followers, unrestrictive border crossing privileges. Traders negotiate among themselves to help each other in their trade. Senegalese transporters negotiate with the Senegalese state to fight Gambian authorities. The *Jakartas* negotiate with the commune of Karang to establish a common fare mechanism even though they fight with the same commune over taxation. The community of Keur Ayib negotiates with Senegalese border agents for them to allow them bring in controlled goods from The Gambia. The police at Amdallai-Karang negotiate with foreign currency traders and watch them engage in their illicit trade. Male currency dealers fight with women currency dealers but they negotiate to share clients between them.

The relationships that happen around the border and in interstate relations are characterised by both harmony and conflict. The political economy of the border is also subject to constant shifts and as such relations formed around it keep evolving. Whatever gimmicks politicians play on the border to foster the logics of their respective states, ordinary people and border communities will always make the border work for them (see chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7). State agents recognise that. This is why as they perform statehood through border administration, they also manifest their belonging to the socio-cultural landscape (chapter 6). This process has inherent tensions, but it is an authentic reproduction of everyday experiences of the border, for state agents and for ordinary people. This is related to how conflict can bring benefits to people, as seen in chapter 5.

The *Jakartas* find new economic opportunities from the disintegrated transport network. The fisheries sector builds on its cross-border economic networks and creates livelihood security for its members. The media can build its image from border closures and from The Gambia-Senegal interstate political difficulties. Civil society groups can also develop new programmes to mediate interstate political difficulties. They can also attract funding for their programmes.

Religious principles of community extend beyond the border. Religious networks have followership that helps them sustain their cross-border community values beyond the reach of the state. Religious practices and attitudes also maintain Senegambian kinship discourses.

The border is a medium for achieving various kinds of objectives. As such, interstate political difficulties can bring new economic opportunities for people, for entities and for the state. In effect, The Gambia-Senegal border works for everyone. This is why, as interstate political difficulties recur, they do not degenerate into violent conflict. The border needs just some little condition of conflict for the growth of the many interests tied to it, but conditions of violent conflict may break many of those interests. The states or the people are not interested in that. Hence, they can use all resources, especially cultural ones, to avoid the escalation of interstate conflict to that harmful level. As such, Senegambian kinship discourses redeem the political economy of the border and sustain the reasonable level of conflict necessary, for making the border work for everyone and for all interests.

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